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Studies
in
Religion and Literature

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Studies in Religion and Literature

By

ERRATA.

Page 9, line 18, *for* 'leaning' *read* 'learning.'
,, 13, ,, 7, } *for* 'Courthorpe' *read* 'Courthope.'
,, 20, note, line 3, }
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TO

SIR HUBERT EDWARD HENRY JERNINGHAM

K.C.M.G.

MY DEAR JERNINGHAM,

WITH your kind permission, I inscribe your name on the first page of this book, as a tribute to an undimmed friendship extending through all the years in which the papers here brought together were written.

I am, my dear Jerningham,

Most sincerely yours,

W. S. LILLY.

ATHENÆUM CLUB,

October 10, 1904.

5910

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Of the Studies brought together in this volume, the first, second, fifth, sixth, and ninth appeared originally in the *Fortnightly Review*, the third in the *Pilot*, and the eighth in the *Nineteenth Century*. I now reclaim them by the courteous permission of the proprietors of those publications. The fourth is reprinted from my *Chapters in European History*, and the seventh from my *Ancient Religion and Modern Thought*—works which have been long out of print. All have been carefully revised, and, to some extent, rewritten.

Contents

		PAGE
I	WHAT WAS SHAKESPEARE'S RELIGION?	1
II	THE MISSION OF TENNYSON	31
III	A GRAND OLD PAGAN	53
IV	A FRENCH SHAKESPEARE	82
V	A NINETEENTH-CENTURY SAVONAROLA	155
VI	CARDINAL WISEMAN'S LIFE AND WORK	179
VII	THE MEANING OF TRACTARIANISM	218
VIII	CONCERNING GHOST STORIES	271
IX	THE THEORY OF THE LUDICROUS	285

Summary

I

WHAT WAS SHAKESPEARE'S RELIGION?

PAGE

Is there any sufficient reason for attributing to Shakespeare orthodox Protestantism? 1

What "orthodox Protestantism" was in England in Shakespeare's time 3

That Shakespeare conformed to it, occasionally, is most probable. But what evidence is there that he gave any real assent to it? . 4

His plays, although assuredly not designed to inculcate the tenets of this or that school in theology, in philosophy, in politics, doubtless reflect, more or less clearly, his mental attitude towards the problems of the day: the times in which he lived mirrored themselves on his translucent and serene intellect . 5

The plays usually cited for Shakespeare's Protestantism are *King John*, *Henry VI.*, and *Henry VIII.* The passages so relied on, examined 10

Those passages are really not proofs of Shakespeare's Protestantism, but signs to the contrary 19

His treatment of the Protestant clergy of his time 19

His yearning fondness for the Old Faith 20

His mention of Evening Mass 23

His acquaintance with the philosophy of the Catholic school . . 26

An ancient tradition that he was "reared up" a Catholic . . 28

"Church Papists" 29

Davies's statement, "He dyed a Papist," though of small authority, not improbably true 30

II

THE MISSION OF TENNYSON

Tennyson, *the* English poet of the nineteenth century 31

What was his chief lesson to his generation and to the generations that should come after? 33

Poetry not merely a pleasing play of fancy: but the most legitimate and the easiest, as well as the most beautiful, instrument of education 34

PAGE

Poetical inspiration: the poets of a nation its truest prophets . . 35
Tennyson's acute sensibility to the intellectual and spiritual, the social and political developments of the times in which he lived 37
Tennyson's sympathy with the scientific movement characteristic of his age 38
The vast progress of the physical sciences not unmixed gain. One result of it the effacement, to a very great extent, of the true idea of law from the popular mind 39
A distinctive characteristic of law is necessity: and for the very notion of necessity we must pass to an order of verities transcending the physical 40
Law is of the will and of the intellect: it is a function of reason . 41
Tennyson's witness to the true conception of law: he felt that the mechanical philosophy offered to him in the name of physical science was utterly inadequate to life: he found in the laws of man's spiritual and moral being, the solution of "the riddle of this painful earth" 43
On those laws he based his Theistic belief 44
his ethical creed 48
his political principles 49

III

A GRAND OLD PAGAN

Walter Savage Landor: one of the most striking personalities in the literary history of the nineteenth century 53
The Man 55
The Literary Artist 63
The Literary Critic 71

IV

A FRENCH SHAKESPEARE

The place of Honoré de Balzac in French literature . . . 82
He is not only the greatest master of French romantic fiction, but the exponent of French life under the Empire, the Restoration, and the Monarchy of July. He claims to be not a mere teller of stories, but the historian of a civilization. And it is thus that he is considered in this Study 88
Plan of his *Comédie Humaine* 94
His *Père Goriot* the best introduction to it 96
His estimate of Parisian life 115
of Provincial life 122
of Country life 128
The picture which he presents sombre and terrible. Is it true? . 135
Balzac's competency and honesty 135
Balzac's realism 137

PAGE

Balzac aspired to do something more than paint the types and conditions of nineteenth-century civilization, and to seize its latent meaning. He sought also to judge it 141
He finds society sick of egoism : the *moi-humain* the only thing left by the Revolution 142
The course of events since his death in 1850 has gone far to justify his political views 145
His religious views 146
The charge of immorality brought against the *Comédie Humaine* . 149
Balzac's philosophical views 153
The *Comédie Humaine* the true expression of the society in which its author lived, and which found in him "its most original, most appropriate, and most penetrating historian" . . . 153

V

A NINETEENTH-CENTURY SAVONAROLA

Félicité de Lamennais unquestionably among the great names of the last century 155
And a true exponent of its *Zeitgeist* 155
His childhood and youth 156
Realizes that his true vocation was to write 158
Strained relations between Pope Pius VII. and Napoleon . . 158
Lamennais's first book, *L'État de l'Église en France*, sounds the note of opposition to State control of Religion 161
The *Essay on Indifference* 163
His *La Religion considérée dans ses Rapports avec l'Ordre politique et social* 164
The true account of the "Gallican Liberties" 165
His *Des progrès de la Révolution et de la guerre contre l'Église* . 167
The Society of St. Peter 168
The *Avenir* 169
The French Episcopate hostile to Lamennais 170
His journey to Rome with Lacordaire and Montalembert . . 171
The *Affaires de Rome* 171
The Encyclical *Mirari Vos* 173
Lamennais's last twenty years and death 173
How far time has vindicated, and is vindicating, his views . . 173
His mistakes and their source 176
May be termed the Savonarola of the nineteenth century . . 177

VI

CARDINAL WISEMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

Merits of Mr. Wilfrid Ward's *Life and Times of Cardinal Wiseman* 179
Wiseman's boyhood and youth 182
Impressions left on him by his four years of student life in Rome . 184
His leading principles, thoughts, and aims 185

PAGE

Publishes his *Horæ Syriacæ* in 1827, which gives him a European reputation, and is appointed first Professor of Oriental Languages at the Roman University, and then Rector of the English College in Rome 186
The English College under his presidency 187
Is deeply influenced by Father Ignatius Spencer 188
His *Lectures on the Connexion between Science and Revealed Religion* 189
Visits England in 1835 190
Condition of Catholics in England at that time 191
Lectures at the Sardinian Chapel and at Moorfields Church . . 193
Abatement of anti-Catholic prejudice brought about by his Lectures 194
Appointed President of Oscott, and consecrated Bishop . . . 195
His influence on the Oxford Movement 195
His devotion to the poetry and symbolism of the Catholic Liturgy . 198
The restoration of the Catholic Hierarchy in England . . . 199
Wiseman created a Cardinal, and appointed Archbishop of Westminster 202
The Pastoral "From without the Flaminian Gate" 202
His career as Archbishop and Metropolitan 203
Dr. Manning's influence with him 206
His estrangement from his Chapter, the great bulk of the clergy, and most of his brother Bishops, in his declining days . . 208
His death 212
Some observations upon Cardinal Manning 213

VII

THE MEANING OF TRACTARIANISM

The Tractarian Movement best studied in the person and action of its leader 218
Strong individuality of John Henry Newman's works . . . 219
Condition of religious thought in England in his early days . . 220
John Wesley and his work 222
The Evangelical party 223
Newman's first religious impressions 224
The gradual opening of his mind 225
The nucleus of the Tractarian party 227
The Intellectual Revolution in England 228
The influence of Coleridge 229
The philosophical basis of the Tractarian Movement . . . 230
John Keble and the *Christian Year* 231
The *Tracts for the Times* 234
The idea of the Tractarian Movement 236
The progress of the Tractarian Movement 237
Newman's defence of the Tractarian Movement 238
National feeling and the Tractarian Movement 239
The Anglican Bishops and the Tractarian Movement . . . 240

PAGE

The collapse of the Tractarian Movement 241
Newman's secession 243
Thomas Arnold 247
What Tractarianism has done for the Church of England . . 248
What it has done for the Catholic Church 250
Newman's work in the Catholic Church 251
Newman's controversial activity 254
His consistency from first to last 256
Tractarianism in relation to the great question of the day . . 262
Newman holds informal inference to be the true method in religious as in other inquiries 263
Conscience the great internal Prophet of Theism 264
The No of the world and human history 265
Difficulties of Theistic belief 266
The probability of a Revelation 267
If there is a Revelation, where should we look for it? . . . 268
Christianity and the Catholic Church 269
The chief significance of Tractarianism 270

VIII

CONCERNING GHOST STORIES

Two points to be considered:
I. Are not many Ghost Stories true?
II. If they are or may be true, what can be the harm of telling them? 272
It is quite easy to deny tales of apparitions on the *a priori* ground . 272
But the *a priori* argument against apparitions of the departed resolves itself into the doctrine "Post mortem nihil est, ipsaque mors nihil" 273
This doctrine is probably not widely held in England. The prevailing opinion in this country is that "the dead, when they depart hence, do not cease to exist: that they remain, but without the *usual* means of approach towards us and correspondence with us," and that the phenomenal universe is but a veil hiding from us spiritual realities 274
The question is, Can any communication reach us from beyond that veil? 274
The evidence for an affirmative answer to this question seems overwhelming 274
Schopenhauer's view 277
But allowing that Ghost Stories are, or may be, true, is the telling them to be accounted a harmless amusement? 279
To a *science* of the supernatural we shall never attain by human industry, because the subject is too obscure, the instances are too conflicting and contradictory: the causal *nexus* is beyond us 281
The mystery of death is impenetrable to us; and the inference for those who believe in a Divine ordering of the world is that our ignorance is best for us 281

PAGE

Men's curiosity is insatiable, but it is not always wise: there are things as to which it is better not satisfied 281
Christianity has ever reprobated soothsaying, consulting the stars, magic, and similar arts—even though not false—as rash intrusions into the Secret of the King, by-paths to things beyond flesh and blood, avenues to ill, not to good, leading not to sane and safe knowledge, but to bewilderment, illusion, and despair . . 282
A longing to pry into the mysteries of the grave, a token of intellectual and spiritual decay 282
And the subject too full of sacred and solemn mystery to be prostituted to a topic for idle talking 283

IX

THE THEORY OF THE LUDICROUS

Vast extent of the Ludicrous; Barrow's account of it . . . 287
Catalogue of the varieties of the Ludicrous 289
Most of the varieties present no special difficulties; but four, viz. Humour, Wit, Bulls, and Parody, require some consideration. Remarks upon them 290
National characteristics 296
Can we define the Ludicrous? What Plato, Aristotle, the Schoolmen, Herbert Spencer, and Schopenhauer have written on this subject, considered 299
What is the function of the Ludicrous? What end does it serve in human life? 306

Studies in Religion and Literature

I

WHAT WAS SHAKESPEARE'S RELIGION?

(I)

THE question, "What was Shakespeare's religion?" has been asked by a multitude of critics, and has received widely differing answers. The latest is to be found in Mr. Churton Collins's *Studies in Shakespeare*, a volume which is assuredly a very important contribution to the subjects with which it deals. On every page of it is evidence of wide and sound scholarship, and of great critical acumen. But its chief value seems to me to lie in the evidence which it offers that Shakespeare "was not merely a fair Latin scholar," but possessed an "extensive knowledge of the classics both of Greece and Rome." Mr. Churton Collins is most felicitous in the arguments with which he supports this hypothesis. I venture to think, however, that he is less happy in the answer which he gives to the question, "What was Shakespeare's religion?" He tells us that "the attitude of

Sophocles towards the conventional creeds of Athens" —an attitude which he describes as implying a recognition of "the wisdom of orthodoxy"—"is precisely that of Shakespeare towards Protestant Christianity." Again, he parallels "the orthodox Polytheism" of Sophocles with "the equally orthodox Christian Protestantism of Shakespeare," adding, "To Sophocles had descended a religion which, whatever may have been the sentiments of the vulgar, had, as accepted by the more enlightened, been purged of its grosser superstitions: and what preceding poets and philosophers had effected for the religion of Sophocles, the Reformation had effected for that of Shakespeare." Once more we read, "Both" [Montaigne and Shakespeare] "are practically theistical agnostics, but both reverence, for the same formal reason, Christianity: the one as embodied in Roman Catholicism, the other as embodied in Protestantism." I am not quite sure that I understand what is meant by "theistical agnostics;" but this is not the point upon which I wish to dwell. I wish rather to inquire whether there exists any sufficient reason for attributing to Shakespeare sympathy with, or reverence for, "orthodox Protestantism."

(II)

Now, it may not be superfluous to consider, at starting, what Mr. Churton Collins means by "orthodox" Protestantism. Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Zwinglianism, to mention no other varieties, all

claimed that adjective. There would seem to be no standard of Protestant orthodoxy. But I suppose we may safely hold that in Mr. Churton Collins's volume, "orthodox" Protestantism denotes the amalgam of the three forms just mentioned of anti-Catholic Christianity, whereof the Thirty-nine Articles, imposed the year before Shakespeare was born, and the two Books of Homilies, are a kind of compendium. As a matter of fact, indeed, it is rather to the Homilies than to the Thirty-nine Articles that we should go for a revelation of "the mind of the Church of England" (as the phrase is) in Shakespeare's time. Those documents represent, most accurately, the ethos of the religious innovators, claiming the name of Reformers, who branded the Catholic Church as the whore of Babylon, and the Pope as antichrist, and claimed for themselves that they were preachers of righteousness to "a world drowned in abominable idolatry" till "Gospel light first dawned from Bullen's eyes" upon the awakened conscience of Henry VIII. And so in the Third Part of the *Sermon of Good Works* we read, "Honour be to God, who did put light in the heart of His faithful and true minister of most famous memory, King Henry the Eighth, and gave him the knowledge of His Word, and an earnest affection to seek His glory, and to put away all such superstitious and pharisaical sects" (viz. the Religious Orders) "by antichrist invented, and to set up again the true Word of God and glory of His most blessed Name." That was the sum and substance, according to most accredited Anglican Reformers, of the

ecclesiastical revolution initiated by Henry VIII., and completed by Elizabeth. Of course, theologically considered, it passed through several phases. Henry VIII. probably continued to hold well-nigh all Catholic doctrines, except the Supremacy of the Pope, after his revolt from Rome. On the death of that Prince, the direction of the movement fell chiefly into the hands of Cranmer, who, whatever his own religious convictions—if, indeed, he had any—favoured first Lutheranism, then Zwinglianism, and, lastly, Calvinism. In the reign of Elizabeth, "Calvinism," as Dean Church observes, "nearly succeeded in making itself master in the English Church;"[1] and he justly points to Whitgift's "Lambeth Articles," in 1595, as evidence of this assertion. That is what "orthodox" Protestantism meant in England in the days of Shakespeare; a Puritan scholasticism of the most arid and arbitrary kind, based on the narrowest interpretation, or rather misinterpretation, of isolated Biblical texts, void of philosophy, void of poetry, void of profundity; passionate in its hatred of the ancient faith, and prostituting the sanctions of religion to the service of secular tyranny. That Shakespeare outwardly conformed to it, at all events occasionally, is most probable. But what evidence is there for believing that he gave any real assent to it, whether from political or other motives? that he preferred its uncouth superstitions to the charming *Aberglaube* of medieval piety? for holding—to put the point in Archbishop Trench's words—that "he was the child

[1] *Pascal and other Sermons*, p. 76.

of the English Reformation"? that "he was born of its spirit"?

(III)

For light upon this question let us turn to Shakespeare's plays. And here a *caveat* must first be entered. Shakespeare's plays of course tell us something about himself. How could it be otherwise? For they are his truest self. But it appears to me that we should be very chary of attempting to draw from them the inference that he desired to inculcate any tenets of this or that school, in theology, in philosophy, in politics. I assuredly do not believe that when he addressed himself to the composition of his dramas, there were present to his mind definite theses, of any kind, which he wished to teach. He was a poet in the strictest sense of the word. And a poet is not a professor veiling his prelections in verse. No doubt every great poet is a great teacher. But his teaching is as the teaching of Nature herself: unpremeditated, unreasoned, undefined: like the sound of the sea, or the fragrance of flowers, or the sweet influences of the stars. Like Nature, poets—according to Plato's most true dictum—utter great and wise things which they do not themselves understand. The songs of Apollo are as inspired as his oracles. The poet, "soaring in the high reason of his fancy," like the priestess on her tripod, speaks not of himself. Schelling has put it very well: "The artist, however full of design he is, yet, in respect of that which is the

properly objective in his production, seems to stand under the influence of a power which separates him from all other men, and compels him to declare and represent things which he does not himself properly see through." Again. Shakespeare's genius was essentially dramatic. It was his function to "hold up the mirror to Nature." His whole mind and thought are merged in his creations. He does not so much speak through them. They speak through him. He surrenders himself to the inspiration of his art. Once more. It is quite certain that he regarded his plays as works to be acted, not to be read. He composed them not for posterity, but for the audiences which should come to see them. It was otherwise with his poems. But I do not believe that when writing his dramas it once crossed his mind that he was making a permanent addition to the literature of his country; still less that he was enriching it with its greatest treasures. His object was to serve the purpose of the hour, and to produce good acting plays. With what incomparable ability he achieved that object is still evident, vast as is the difference between the conditions of dramatic representation in his days and in ours. In the pursuit of it, he used the materials of others with a freedom which in this age would rightly be judged scandalous, and, as Heine[1] puts it, would

[1] The passage is well worth quoting: "Und gar Shakespeare selber, wie Viel entlehnte er nicht seiner Vorgängern! Auch diesem Dichter begegnete es, dass ein sauertöpfischer Pamphletist mit der Behauptung gegen ihn auftrat 'das Beste seiner Dramen sei den ältern Schriftstellern entwendet.' Shakespeare wird bei dieser lächerlichen Gelegenheit ein Rabe genannt welcher sich mit den fremden Gefieder des Pfauen geschmäckt habe. Der Schwan von Avon schwieg, und dachte vielleicht

have smiled at the charge of plagiarism. Landor well observes: "He is more original than his originals; he breathed upon dead bodies, and brought them into life." Life! Yes; his creative power is like that of Nature herself. He teems with vitality. The prodigality of his creations, all different, all distinct, all durable, overwhelms us. Not less astonishing is his neglect of them when he had once called them into being. Here, too, it was with him as it is with the Mighty Mother: "I care for nothing; all may go." He took no part, and apparently no interest, in the publication of such of his plays as were printed in his lifetime. He seems to have been quite unconcerned as to what became of them after his death. They are not so much as mentioned in his Will.

It appears to me, therefore, that Mr. Richard Simpson, of whom more presently, greatly errs in crediting Shakespeare with "a design of presenting the great questions of his age with what he conceived to be the best method of their solution;" and that Mr. Churton Collins is quite without warrant in representing him as "the ally of the Ministers of Elizabeth and James," "employing the drama as a commentary on current State affairs, and a direct means of political education." But no doubt the times in which he lived mirrored themselves on his translucent and serene intellect, and his mental attitude towards the problems of his day is more or less clearly reflected in his dramas.

in seinem göttlichen Sinn, 'Ich bin weder Rabe noch Pfau!' und weigte sich sorglos auf den blauen Fluthen der Poesie, manchmal hinauflächelnd zu den Sternen, den goldenen Gedanken des Himmels."—*Shakespeare's Mädchen und Frauen:* Schlusswort

Let us endeavour to see, then, what his plays tell us as to his feelings regarding the great religious question of that age. Were his sympathies—I think that is the right way of putting it—with the old religion of England, or with the new?

In briefly pursuing this inquiry I shall make free use of the materials accumulated by the highly gifted, but little known, scholar mentioned just now, the late Mr. Richard Simpson, concerning whom a word or two must be said in passing. Mr. Simpson devoted his singularly acute and accomplished intellect, for many years, to the study of Elizabethan literature, and attained to a wide and exact knowledge of it not surpassed, probably not equalled, by any of his contemporaries. This may seem a strong assertion. But I think that his writings published in the *Transactions* of the New Shakespeare Society in 1874–75, alone sufficiently warrant it. For some years he was editor of a magazine called *The Rambler*, justly described by a very competent critic in the *Times* as "one of the most learned and interesting periodicals of the Nineteenth Century;" and in 1858 he contributed to it three papers, in which he maintained the view that Shakespeare was probably a Catholic. Eight years afterwards, a French writer, M. Rio, well known for his work on Christian Art, took up this theme, and pursued it at great length, and with more enthusiasm than judgment. In January, 1866, an article from the pen of the late Lord Stanhope—then Lord Mahon—appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, in which both Mr. Simpson and M. Rio were severely dealt with,

and were characterized as "angry zealots." Lord Mahon apparently was as ill acquainted with the character of those writers as with the subject discussed in his essay. M. Rio, a Liberal Catholic, a friend of Montalembert, with whom he strongly sympathized, most assuredly was not a zealot in the sense meant by Lord Mahon; moreover, he was a man of peace, a man of mild and benign disposition. Mr. Simpson, if not altogether "slow to wrath" when provoked, most assuredly had not written his *Rambler* articles in anger. He, too, was a Liberal Catholic—and something more indeed; "liberalissimus" was an epithet not unjustly applied to him. We read in Mr. Gillow's very learned *Bibliographical Dictionary of English Catholics*, "In matters ecclesiastical he was frequently in conflict with the provincial authorities. . . . He helped Mr. Gladstone while writing his treatise on 'Vaticanism,' and the curious leaning of that famous pamphlet is thus largely accounted for."

Mr. Simpson was moved by the attack on him in the *Edinburgh Review* to undertake the composition of a reply, which soon grew into a somewhat bulky treatise. He died in 1876, without having carried into execution his intention of publishing it. Father Sebastian Bowden, of the Oratory, derived largely from his manuscript the materials for a volume entitled *The Religion of Shakespeare*, which appeared in 1899, and deservedly attracted much notice. I am indebted to the kindness of Abbot Gasquet for the loan of Mr. Simpson's papers, and for permission to use them in pursuing the inquiry which I have undertaken.

(IV)

What warrant, then, is there in Shakespeare's plays—there is admittedly none in his poems—for his alleged Protestantism? Do they manifest antipathy to the old religion and sympathy with the new?

The plays usually cited in evidence of Shakespeare's Protestantism are *King John*, *Henry VI.*, and *Henry VIII.* In *King John*, that monarch is made to deliver himself as follows to Cardinal Pandulph, the Legate of Innocent III., sent to call the King to account for refusing Stephen Langton admission to the See of Canterbury, and for appropriating its revenues :—

> "What earthly name to interrogatories
> Can task the free breath of a sacred king?
> Thou canst not, cardinal, devise a name
> So slight, unworthy, and ridiculous,
> To charge me to an answer, as the pope.
> Tell him this tale; and from the mouth of England,
> Add thus much more,—That no Italian priest
> Shall tithe or toll in our dominions;
> But as we under Heaven are supreme head,
> So, under him, that great supremacy,
> Where we do reign, we will alone uphold,
> Without the assistance of a mortal hand:
> So tell the pope; all reverence set apart,
> To him, and his usurp'd authority."

Now, as Father Sebastian Bowden very justly remarks, there is no warrant for attributing to Shakespeare these opinions, congruous enough in the mouth of a royal villain. "John's anti-Catholic speeches no more prove Shakespeare a Protestant than the fool's

saying in his heart, 'There is no God,' makes David a sceptic." Again, Pandulph's denunciation of the King is to some a conclusive proof of Shakespeare's Protestantism.

> "And blesséd shall he be, that doth revolt
> From his allegiance to an heretic;
> And meritorious shall that hand be call'd,
> Canonizéd and worshipp'd as a saint,
> That takes away by any secret course
> Thy hateful life."

Father Sebastian Bowden is of opinion that the argument in favour of Shakespeare's Protestantism based on this passage is of some weight—he proceeds to give answers to it, for which I must refer my readers to his own pages—because "Here it is Pandulph, the Legate himself, who is giving utterance to the very doctrines attributed to the Church by its enemies." *Attributed to the Church by its enemies!* But, as a matter of fact, sentiments not practically distinguishable from those put by Shakespeare into the mouth of Pandulph were professed by devoted friends of the Church, and, what is more, were acted upon by them, as the celebrated royal murders of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries sufficiently show.[1] Even the great name of Suarez may be cited

[1] It is perhaps hardly necessary to remark that Protestants of all kinds in that age practised and defended the assassination of rulers whom they considered wicked or unjust. Even "the mild Melanchthon" in one of his letters prays God to inspire some valiant man with a resolution to remove Henry VIII. "Anglicus tyrannus Cromwellium interfecit et conatur divortium cum Juliacensi puella. Quam vere dixit ille in Tragœdia non gratiorem victimam Deo mactari posse quam tyrannum. Utinam alicui forti vero Deus hanc mentem inserat." Quoted by Cardinal Hergenröther, *Catholic Church and Christian State*, vol. ii. p. 259 (Eng. Tr.).

in defence of one species of tyrannicide. We read in that divine's *Disputatio de Bello,* that the slaying of an unlawful usurper by a private individual is allowable when the conditions of a just warfare are present, when no other means can be found for being rid of him, and when the consequences of his death will not be worse than the tyranny itself—a doctrine surely not in itself unreasonable. A legitimate ruler deposed by the Pope was held by many to be in the like case with an unlawful usurper, on the ground that when so deposed he had ceased to be a legitimate ruler. Suarez, in his *Defensio Fidei,* applies himself indeed to limit and safeguard this doctrine, and lays it down that a deposed prince may *not* be killed by any private person, at once (*statim*), or unless that was specifically provided for in the sentence, or another sentence or command to that effect should be given. But we cannot ignore history, which does not proceed by syllogism. Suarez was not writing in Utopia. Distinctions between legitimate ruler and usurper, "non statim" and the rest, were little regarded in those savage and turbulent times. It is certain that a plot against Elizabeth, in which her death by violence was contemplated, much engaged the attention of Ridolfi, the agent of St. Pius V. And in Gabutio's[1] account of that Pontiff, given by the Bollandists, we are told that he meditated her "removal."

[1] He writes, "Cogitabat illam malorum omnium sentinam, seu ut appellabat ipse flagitiorum servam, de medio tollere, si minus posset ad sanitatem revocari." Gabutio's work is a translation of an earlier Italian *Life* by Catena, and the word in the original which is rendered by "de medio tollere" is "levare."

I find no sort of warrant for Shakespeare's alleged Protestantism in his depicting this matter truly, as it was, by attributing to Pandulph the sentiments in question.

But again. The play of *King John*, as we have it, is an adaptation by Shakespeare of an earlier drama, *The Troublesome Reign of King John*. The authorship of that work is uncertain. Mr. Courthorpe regards it as a juvenile composition of Shakespeare himself. I confess that the arguments by which he supports that view—they will be found in an Appendix to the fourth volume of his admirable *History of English Poetry*—seem to me quite unconvincing; and certainly the weight of critical authority is overwhelmingly against him. The question is too long to discuss here; nor is its discussion necessary for my present point, which is this: *The Troublesome Reign of King John*—whether composed by Shakespeare himself (which I do not believe) in a youthful fit of Protestantism, or by another—teems with virulent anti-Catholic passion and prejudice. "It was written," as Mr. Simpson succinctly says, "to glorify Protestantism and vilify the ancient faith;" it is adorned by ribald stories of friars and nuns; and it puts into John's mouth a prophecy of the coming of Henry VIII., a hero—

> "Whose arm shall reach unto the gates of Rome,
> And with his feet tread down the strumpet pride
> That sits upon the chair of Babylon."

All this disappears from the play of *King John*, as Shakespeare recast it. Mr. Simpson truly remarks, "Every sentence in the old play which reflected upon

any Catholic doctrine, or misrepresented any Catholic practice, he has swept out." I may observe, in passing, that the anti-Catholic bitterness which informs *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, abundantly appears in the works of the English dramatists contemporary with Shakespeare. This surely renders the absence from his writings of abuse and ridicule of the ancient faith all the more remarkable and significant.

The next proof of Shakespeare's Protestantism which we have to examine is derived from his picture of Cardinal Beaufort, in *Henry VI.*, and of Cardinal Wolsey, in *Henry VIII.* First, as to Cardinal Beaufort. I put aside the question how far the First Part of *Henry VI.* is really Shakespeare's work, and will assume, for my present purpose, that he is fully responsible for it. Cardinal Beaufort, then, is represented in the play—not unjustly, though with many errors of detail—as a wicked and worldly prelate, and is in one passage taunted by Gloucester, who threatens to trample on his Cardinal's hat, with having given to courtesans "indulgences to sin." The phrase, naturally enough, suggests to the Protestant mind the scandals which led to Luther's revolt; but, as a matter of fact, Cardinal Beaufort's "indulgences" were not ecclesiastical documents at all; they were merely licences of immunity to certain privileged houses of ill-fame within his jurisdiction. They were not licences to commit sin, as the documents vended by Tetzel are popularly, but erroneously, supposed to have been. There is no trace of Protestantism here.

As little is there in the line in *Henry VIII.* referring to the story that Cardinal Wolsey was, upon one occasion, surprised *in flagrante delicto* with "a brown wench." But here let me quote a vigorous passage, in which Mr. Simpson deals with the charges against the two prelates.

"The charges are all personal: there is only one line which seems to give countenance to the prejudice that Catholicism gave indulgences to sin. But this line refers, absolutely and wholly, to certain dens of infamy in Southwark, from licensing which the Bishops of Winchester drew some small part of their income, to the scandal of the age. For Shakespeare to put this reproach into Gloucester's mouth was both historically probable and morally right, even though he were a professed Catholic. For every one must own that it is one thing for a secular government to tolerate, and even to regulate such dens, as Shakespeare might be supposed to recommend by implication, in *Measure for Measure*, and another for them to be a source of income to a bishop.

"With regard to Wolsey, his faults were really those which English Catholics had most reason to curse, and which they did curse accordingly. It is nonsense to suppose that Shakespeare's feelings must have been opposed to Catholicism because he refers to Wolsey's 'brown wench,' for it was an allusion which all the Catholics of his day permitted themselves to make. What religion do most of the writers profess who give us the scandalous stories about Mazarin, Richelieu, Retz, and Dubois? Of what religion were the people of France when they drew up the famous supplication against Boniface VIII., wherein they call the Pope by an opprobrious name that a witness in a police court would refuse to utter? What religion did Cardinal Fisher profess when he granted that the lives of Popes and Cardinals were, possibly, more than diametrically opposed to that of Christ, in their eagerness for money, their vainglory, their luxury and lust, by

which the name of Christ is everywhere blasphemed—'But this,' says he, 'only confirms our argument' (Fisher, *Opp.*, p. 1370. Ed. Wiceburg, 1597);—or More, when he wrote his epigram on Bishop Posthumus—

> 'Præsul es, et merito præfectus, Posthume, sacris,
> Quo magis in toto non fuit orbe sacer;'

or Petrarch, when he wrote his famous letter about the French Babylon (Avignon), with its scandalous stories of *Pontificalis lascivia*, and of the *hircina libido* of Cardinals (Epist. sine tit. XVI.); or Campion, when he spoke of Wolsey as 'a man undoubtedly born to honour, I think some prince's bastard, no butcher's son, exceeding wise, fair-spoken, high-minded, full of revenge, *vicious of his body*, lofty to his enemies . . . thrall to affections, brought-a-bed with flattery, insatiable to get, and more prince-like in bestowing . . . never happy till his overthrow' (*Hist. of Ireland*, Bk. 2, c. 9, printed in Holinshed's *Chronicles*), or as 'vir magnificentissimus, iracundus, confidens, *scortator*, simulator'?"

Another proof of Shakespeare's sympathy with the new order in religion, an evidence of his orthodox Protestantism at one time much relied on, is derived from the Fifth Act of *King Henry VIII.*, where Cranmer is made to prophesy, at the baptism of Elizabeth:

> "In her days every man shall eat in safety
> Under his own vine what he plants; and sing
> The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours:
> God shall be truly known——"

This, as Mr. Simpson correctly observes, "is the only piece of unquestionable Protestantism in Shakespeare's plays." But there is a general consensus of the most authoritative critics—Mr. Churton Collins is, I think, the only considerable dissentient—that the

Fifth Act of *Henry VIII.*, with the exception of Scene I., is not Shakespeare's at all; that it is an addition of Fletcher's. Lord Mahon, indeed, writing in the *Edinburgh Review*, lays it down, that the addition "must have been made with Shakespeare's full sanction," that "not a line could have been inserted without Shakespeare's assent." But why? Here Lord Mahon is "most ignorant of what he's most assured." There is no sort of evidence for the proposition which he so confidently affirms. The presumption is strongly the other way, if we consider that—as has been pointed out in an earlier page—Shakespeare seems not to have troubled himself at all about the fate of his plays when they had once been produced,[1] and that Fletcher would have no more scruple in altering his work than he had displayed in altering the work of other playwrights. The genuineness of this Act is rejected on the grounds of its metre, style, and evident disconnection with the four preceding Acts. Only the last-mentioned of these grounds can be glanced at here: and, in my judgment, it alone is quite conclusive. Pope justly remarks in his Preface, "To the life and variety of character which we find in Shakespeare must be added the wonderful preservation of it, which is such throughout his plays, that had all the speeches been printed without the very names of the persons, I believe we might have supplied them with certainty to every speech." Now,

[1] Moreover, the probability is that he had parted with all his theatrical property to Alleyne in April, 1612—a year previously to the representation of *Henry VIII.* before King James I.

the Fifth Act of *Henry VIII.* is informed by a perfectly different ethos from the rest of the play. In the first four Acts, the afflictions, the virtues, and the patience of Queen Katharine, one of Shakespeare's noblest and most touching types of womanhood, are, as Mr. Spedding observes, "elaborately exhibited." "Our whole sympathy," Father Sebastian Bowden truly points out, "is evoked exclusively on behalf of the deposed Queen, and our indignation is aroused at the shameless wrong done her. Yet Henry, the perpetrator of this iniquity, the ruthless sacrificer of a fine and noble wife for a licentious caprice, euphemistically termed his conscience, Anne, his accomplice in the evil deed, 'a spleeny Lutheran,' and Cranmer, the servile minister of their passions, under the cloak of religion, are all three, without explanation, repentance, or any justifying cause, crowned in the Fifth Act with the full blaze of early glory and the promise of happiness." "It is," to quote again Mr. Spedding, "as though Nathan's rebuke to David had ended not with the doom of death to the child just born, but with a promise of the felicities of Solomon." I add that Henry VIII., in the first four Acts, is a very different person from the monarch held up to veneration, in the pulpits of the Established Church, by the Book of Homilies; "the faithful and true minister of God," endowed with "knowledge of His Word, and an earnest affection to seek His glory." He is, in Father Sebastian Bowden's well-chosen language, "a melodramatic, arrogant, oily hyprocrite, and his perpetual cry almost serves to characterize him—

"'Conscience, conscience,
Oh, 'tis a tender place; and I must leave her.'"

Mr. Simpson writes: "Dr. Döllinger once told me that he thought the play of *Henry VIII.* to be a striking evidence of the Catholic opinions of Shakespeare. This, I think, will appear to be a just view to any one who takes the trouble to reflect what kind of a thing Decker, Munday, or Marlowe, or the author of the *Troublesome Reign*, would have made of it. Any one of them would have made the Reformation the heroic act of his reign; would have made Katharine and her daughter Mary pale before Anne Boleyn and her daughter Elizabeth; would have glorified the Seymours; and would have made the drama as tall a bully to the Catholics as the monument on Fish Hill was before its lying inscription was hacked out."

(V)

Mr. Simpson, then, does not seem to speak too strongly in maintaining that the passages commonly adduced as proofs of Shakespeare's Protestant sympathies "are rather signs to the contrary." It should be noted, too, that his treatment of the Protestant clergy of his time is by no means respectful, which, perhaps, is not to be wondered at. But on this subject let us hear Mr. Thornbury—a very strong Protestant—who, in *Shakespeare's England*, writes as follows:—

"The Elizabethan chaplain held an anomalous position: he was respected in the parlour for his mission, and despised

in the servants' hall for his slovenliness; he was often drunken and frequently quarrelsome; now the butler broke his head in a drinking bout, and now the abigail pinned cards and coney-tails to his cassock. To judge from Sir Oliver Martext and Sir Hugh Evans, the parish priests of Shakespeare's day were no very shining lights, and the poet seems to fall back, as in *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, on the ideal priest of an earlier age. It is indeed true that he always mentions the Old Faith with a certain yearning fondness."[1]

Yes; it is true that Shakespeare "always mentions the Old Faith with a certain yearning fondness:" the expression is well chosen. In Henry V. he gives us a well-nigh perfect type of a Catholic hero, all whose public acts bear a religious impress, "who believes in Purgatory; in alms-deed, prayer, fasting, pious foundations, as satisfactory works for the souls detained there;" and "whose Catholic faith and worship appear like the flowers of true devotion, not the weeds of superstition." In Friar Lawrence, we have "one of his kindliest creations." "In *Much Ado About Nothing*," writes Mr. Knight, "it is the Friar who, when Hero is accused, vindicates her reputation with as much sagacity as charitable zeal. . . . In *Measure for Measure* the whole plot is carried on by the Duke assuming the reverend manners and professing the active benevolence of a Friar. In an age when the

[1] Vol. i. p. 211. There can be no doubt that the Lollard "martyr," Oldcastle, is satirized in the character of Falstaff, whose name seems to have been substituted, Mr. Courthorpe writes, "in consequence of the protests of the living descendants of Oldcastle, backed, no doubt, by the Puritan faction."—*History of English Poetry*, vol. iv. p. 113.

prejudices of the multitude were flattered and stimulated by abuse and ridicule of the ancient ecclesiastical character, Shakespeare always exhibits it so as to command respect and affection."[1] In *As You Like It*, "an old religious man," a hermit, it is, by whom the usurping Duke

> ". . . was converted,
> Both from his enterprise, and from the world."

In *All's Well that Ends Well*,[2] we find—more daring still—a tribute to one of the most beautiful and touching doctrines of Catholicism in the recognition of the power of the Blessed Virgin's intercession.

> "What angel shall
> Bless this unworthy husband? he cannot thrive,
> Unless her prayers, whom Heaven delights to hear,
> And loves to grant, reprieve him from the wrath
> Of greatest justice."

"Whose prayers are these?" Mr. Simpson asks; and he well replies, "Not those of Helen, but of one greater than an angel, whose prayers God delights to hear and loves to grant. This is exactly the way in which Catholics speak of the Blessed Virgin; and the lines will not apply to any but her. The testimony is brief but decisive; Shakespeare in these lines affirms distinctly, if not intentionally, one of the most characteristic doctrines that distinguishes the Catholic from the Protestant community."

[1] *Biography of Shakespeare*, p. 183.

[2] It is notable, as Mr. Simpson has pointed out, that Shakespeare has with perfect propriety put into the mouth of the Clown—designated by his mistress "a foul-mouthed and calumnious knave"—a few anti-Catholic scurrilities which are found in this play.

Again. In *Measure for Measure*, the ethos of the play is strikingly Catholic. The whole fable is informed by an idea quite alien from the Protestant mind; that idea of the surpassing excellence and sacrosanct character of virginal chastity, which Mr. John Morley calls "the medieval superstition about purity."[1] Isabella, the votarist or postulant of St. Clare, is Shakespeare's noblest type of womanhood, commanding the reverence even of the dissolute Lucio, as "a thing ensky'd and sainted," and imposing a bridle on his undisciplined tongue. Though he follows the worse things, he knows and respects the better. Not so that accomplished critic, Hazlitt, looking at the matter from the ordinary Protestant standpoint. His comment is that he is not "greatly enamoured of Isabella's rigid chastity;" that he has not "much confidence in the virtue that is sublimely good at another's expense." And it must be confessed that if judged by the latest—and presumably the most perfect—system of Protestant morals, Isabella's virginal constancy is indefensible. "Totality of life in self, in offspring, and in fellow-men," is Mr. Herbert Spencer's criterion of most highly evolved conduct; of conduct superlatively ethical. Such totality Isabella would certainly have achieved by compliance with Angelo's desire; and therefore, I suppose, her non-compliance stands condemned by the Spencerian rule of right and wrong. In Angelo, I observe, we have a striking example of the type of character too frequently engendered by Puritanism, which is merely Protestantism

[1] *Voltaire*, p. 152.

turned sour; of that repulsive amalgam of prudery and profligacy exhibited, from time to time, by chosen vessels of what is now called "the Nonconformist Conscience."

But to catalogue the evidence of Shakespeare's "yearning fondness for the Old Faith," scattered throughout his works, would require a volume. And indeed the task has been excellently accomplished by Mr. Simpson, as may be seen from the pages of Father Sebastian Bowden's work. It well warrants him in saying: "The readiness and aptitude with which Shakespeare avails himself of Catholic imagery are manifested again and again; he puts before us temples, altars, priests, friars, nuns, the Mass, sacrifices, patens of gold, chalices, incense, relics, holy crosses, the invocation of Saints and Angels, the sign of the Cross, the sacraments of Baptism, Penance, Holy Eucharist, Extreme Unction, details of the ritual, as, for instance, the *Benedictio Thalami*. All these, and many other Catholic rites and usages, are introduced with a delicacy and fitness possible only for a mind habituated to the Church's tone of thought."[1] And here would seem to be the proper place for remarking upon a passage which many writers have held to be evidence to the contrary: among them Lord Mahon, and a far weightier critic, Edmond Scherer. I mean the line in *Romeo and Juliet*, where mention is made of evening Mass.

> "Are you at leisure, holy Father, now,
> Or shall I come to you at evening Mass?"

[1] Page 12.

"Evening Mass!" says Lord Mahon; "it is as absurd as to talk of evening breakfast." Well, the answer is, that here again Lord Mahon's assurance sprang from ignorance. Evening Mass is now practically unknown in the Catholic Church. In Shakespeare's time it was common enough. To live is to change; and Catholicism, which has been very much alive during the nineteen centuries of its existence, has given evidence of its vitality by changing a great deal. To mention only two instances. The most popular devotion among Catholics, after the *Our Father*, is the *Hail, Mary*. Now, the second part of the *Hail, Mary*, as it is at present universally said in the Western Church—the precatory part—was added to the Angelic Salutation in the sixteenth century. The rite of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, which, next to the Mass, is the most popular service, dates from the same period. As to evening Mass, I will quote Father Sebastian Bowden, who, founding himself on Mr. Simpson's learned observations, and supplementing them, writes as follows:—

"According to Liturgical writers, there was great latitude in ancient times as to the hour of Mass. The time for celebration changed, Strabo[1] says, with the character of the feast. It might be before noon, about None, sometimes at Vespers, and sometimes at night. And Martene[2] gives notice of solemn Masses said on fast days at three o'clock, in Lent in the evening, and at night at Christmas, Easter Eve, St. John Baptist, and days of Ordination. As for low Masses, he says, 'we think they were said at any hour that

[1] *De Rebus Ecclesiasticis*, c. 23.
[2] *De Antiquis Ecclesiæ Ritibus*, lib. i. c. 3, art. iii.

did not interfere with the high Mass.' Of this he gives several examples, and then concludes: 'This shows that low Mass might be said at any hour—dawn, 8 a.m., noon, after None (3 p.m.), evening, and after Compline (night). Even to this day (1699), in the church of St. Denis, the Bishop says the solemn Mass for the Kings of France in the evening, and in the Church of Rouen, on Ascension Day, Mass is often said in the evening.'

"St. Pius V. (1566–72) discountenanced and prohibited afternoon and evening Masses. But the isolation of the English clergy, owing to the then difficulty of communication, might have withheld from them the knowledge of this law for some considerable time.[1] It was so slow in penetrating Germany, that it had to be enforced by various councils, *e.g.* Prague in 1605, Constance in 1609, Salzburg in 1616. Cardinal Bona (1672) seems to say that in his time high Mass was sung in Lent, and on Vigils at 3 p.m. instead of sunset, the ancient time.[2] And the remarkable thing is this, that according to the testimony of the Liturgical writer, Friedrich Brenner,[3] Verona was one of the places in which the forbidden custom lingered even to our own century. After quoting the precepts against it, he says, 'Notwithstanding, evening Masses are still said in several Italian churches, as at Vercelli on Christmas Eve by the Lateran Canons, at Venice by the same; moreover, in the *Cathedral of Verona*, and even in the Papal Chapel at Rome.' Since, then, notwithstanding the Papal prohibition, the custom of having evening Masses lingered in Verona for nearly three centuries after Shakespeare's day, it becomes most probable that in his time it was a usual occurrence in England. But whether it were a usual occurrence in England or not, it was certainly so in Verona. To assert, then, as so many have done, that Shakespeare's mention of an evening Mass argues in him an ignorance of

[1] Navarr., *Lib. de Orat.*, c. 21, n. 31, et *Enchirid. Confess.*, c. 25, n. 85.

[2] *Rer. Liturg.*, lib. ii. pp. 182–186 (Paris, 1672).

[3] *Geschichtliche Darstellung der Verrichtung der Eucharistie* (Bamberg, 1824), vol. iii. p. 346.

Catholic customs, is to convict oneself of the very ignorance falsely ascribed to the poet. Afternoon and evening Masses were, as we have seen, frequently celebrated. It is, however, a remarkable coincidence that in Verona, the scene of Shakespeare's evening Mass, the custom of celebrating late Masses lasted longer than in any other city."

(VI)

I think I have said enough in support of my contention that Shakespeare's sympathies were with the old religion of England, not with the new. Heine's keen intellect does not seem to have been at fault when he reckoned it "a piece of good fortune that Shakespeare came just at the right time," before "the Puritans succeeded in rooting up, flower by flower, the religion of the past;" when "the popular belief of the Middle Ages, Catholicism, destroyed in theory, yet existed in all its enchantment in the feelings (*im Gemüthe*) of men, and upheld itself in their manners, fashions, and intuitions."[1] So Carlyle appears to have been well warranted in accounting Shakespeare "the noblest product of Middle-Age Catholicism."[2] It was of course on its æsthetic side that the old religion chiefly appealed to him. What Mr. Courthorpe has truly said of Pope, applies equally to him, that "he shunned the disputatious element in the region of faith." Still, he manifests—as is shown clearly in the volume compiled by Father Sebastian Bowden—a

[1] Shakespeare's *Mädchen und Frauen:* Einleitung.
[2] *Lectures on Heroes*, Lect. III.

very considerable acquaintance with the philosophy of the Catholic school; nay, not only an acquaintance with it, but a predilection for it. "He is distinctly Thomist," Father Sebastian Bowden points out, "on the following points: his doctrine of the genesis of knowledge and its strictly objective character; the power of reflection as distinctive of rational creatures; the formation of habits, intellectual and moral; the whole operation of the imaginative faculty."[1] But more. That deep and vivid apprehension of the supremacy of law, which we may call the basis of the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, and which, I may observe, dominated the mind of St. Augustine, is the underlying thought of Shakespeare's dramas. Mr. Churton Collins is assuredly well warranted in attributing to him "the recognition of Universal Law, divinely appointed, immutable, inexorable, and ubiquitous, controlling the physical world, controlling the moral world, vindicating itself in the smallest facts of life, as in the most stupendous convulsions of nature and of society."

(VII)

And now, if from Shakespeare's works we turn to the little that we know of his life, what does it tell us about his religion? Not much. It is certain that his youth was passed amid Catholic influences, for there seems no room for reasonable doubt that his father

[1] P. 34. I must refer my readers to Father Sebastian Bowden's work for instances.

was "a Popish recusant," and suffered many things as such.[1] In Mr. Gillow's *Bibliographical Dictionary*, mention is made of a very ancient Catholic tradition that he was "reared up" by an old Benedictine monk, Dom Thomas Combe, or Coombes, from 1572. This is the more probable as it would account for the knowledge which he possessed of things Catholic, and especially of Catholic philosophy. That he was married in a Protestant Church, that his children were baptized in a Protestant Church, and that he was buried in a Protestant Church, proves nothing about his religious opinions or practices. There can be no question that those who welcomed the change in religion and those who detested it, earnest Protestants and zealous Catholics, resorted alike to the clergy of the Anglican Establishment, during many years after the accession of Elizabeth, for baptism, marriage, and burial.[2] Nor is this surprising. Baptism is held by Catholics to be valid, if the matter and form are duly applied, whether administered by lay or cleric, Protestant or Papist. In marriage, the parties themselves are the ministers of the Sacrament. The Burial of the Dead is one of the corporal works of mercy which may be performed by any one. There is no evidence that Shakespeare practised the Catholic religion during

[1] As to this see chapter ii. of Father Sebastian Bowden's work.

[2] Dr. A. W. Ward seems, therefore, ill founded when he writes (*Hist. of English Dramatic Literature*, vol. ii. p. 41, note, 2nd Ed.): "Inasmuch as all Shakespeare's children were baptized at the Parish Church, there is at least no doubt as to which form of faith he professed," unless we take the word "professed" in a very restricted sense. Of course, none of Elizabeth's subjects dared openly to practise the rites of the Catholic religion.

his lifetime. Whatever may have been his private leanings towards it, I think it probable that he occasionally attended the Protestant services prescribed by law. "There was in his days," writes Mr. Simpson, "a recognized class of Catholics called by Anglicans 'Church Papists,' and by their stricter brethren, 'schismatic Catholics,' who were faithful to the Catholic creed, but would not risk absenting themselves from Protestant worship." We must remember, however, that, as Mr. Simpson quaintly puts it, "the vagabond Bohemian life of the actor removed him from the sphere of ecclesiastical inspection. It was labour in vain to look after his religion. The companies of players were chartered libertines, tolerated panders to sinful cravings, men whose absence from Church was rather desired than disliked. Such was the official view of the stage common to Puritanical beadledom and the Anglican dignitary." The social status of actors at that period was certainly very low. It is notable that Shakespeare, when obtaining a grant of arms, caused it to be made to his father instead of to himself, although he was by far the richer man. "No prosperity," writes Mr. Simpson, "could wash out the taint of the motley; the actor grown gentleman was still a monstrosity, something unnatural, undefined, outside the beaten track of law and custom."

The only positive statement as to Shakespeare's religion that has come down to us is a note added by the Rev. Richard Davies, Rector of Saperton, in Gloucestershire, till 1708, to the biographical notice of Shakespeare in the collection of the Rev. William

Fullman: "He dyed a Papist." The precise date of this note we do not know, but it was written subsequently to 1688—more than seventy years after Shakespeare's death. Nor do we know where Davies obtained the information. All we do know is that he had access to some trustworthy traditions, since he was the first to mention the connection between Shakespeare's clodpate Justice and Sir Thomas Lucy. Davies' entry is probably what Mr. Halliwell Phillipps has called it, "the casual note of a provincial hearsay." But Mr. Simpson's contention that Shakespeare's opinions were Catholic, and "that, with such opinions, he probably would, if he had the opportunity, die a Papist," does not seem excessive. More than that we cannot say. It is to me satisfactory that we can say so much. It is pleasant that there is, at all events, some reason for thinking that he did not set out on his journey to the "undiscovered country," "unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd;" that the ancient faith, whose sweetness and power he had felt and confessed in a day of trouble and of rebuke and of blasphemy, was the minister of God to him for good in his supreme hour, and brought him peace at the last.

II

THE MISSION OF TENNYSON

(I)

I PROPOSE to speak to you this afternoon about a poet who seems to me *the* English poet of this age of ours: the poet who will, in the event, hold much the same predominant position in English literature of the nineteenth century as Pope holds in English literature of the eighteenth century. There are perhaps only two poets who could dispute that position with Tennyson —Wordsworth and Browning. Wordsworth, I think, soared occasionally to greater heights than Tennyson ever attained—notably in his *Ode on Immortality*, and in his *Ode to Duty*. But, on the other hand, he certainly descended often to depths—depths of desultory drivel, I had almost said—to which Tennyson never sank. Nor are his great gifts such as to win for him a very wide circle of readers. A philosophic student of nature and of the human heart, his verse appeals to "fit audience but few." Tennyson's range—I shall have

[1] This Lecture, delivered from a few notes at the London Institution on Monday, Dec. 7, 1896, is now printed from the shorthand writer's report, with such corrections as seemed necessary.

to speak of this hereafter—was much wider. Browning appears to me to sink, too frequently, much lower than Wordsworth ever sank. And a vast quantity of his poetry is hopelessly marred by want of form. I trust I shall not seem unjust to this highly-endowed man. I yield to no one in admiration of such verse as that which he has given us in *Rabbi Ben Ezra* and *Pippa Passes*. But I confess that he often reminds me of Horace's description of Lucilius. That fluent veteran, it appears, would frequently perform the feat of dictating two hundred verses "stans pede in uno," a phrase the precise meaning of which has exercised the critics a great deal, but which we may render with sufficient accuracy "as fast as he could." And, Horace adds, as the turbid stream flowed along, there was much which one could wish away—"quum flueret lutulentus erat quod tollere velles." I confess—I hope I shall not shock any one here very much—that a good deal of Browning's verse appears to me little better than random doggrel, while the so-called philosophy which it is supposed to set forth is largely mere bombastic rhodomontade on subjects which the poet had never taken the trouble to think out. If ever there was a writer who darkened counsel by words without knowledge, it was Browning.

Far otherwise is it with Tennyson. He appears to have laid to heart that most true dictum that poetry is the loftiest expression of the art of writing. "The art of writing," note: which recalls the lines of Pope—

> "True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
> As those move easiest who have learnt to dance."

There is not a poem of Tennyson's—or there is hardly one—which is not the result of prolonged meditation and prolonged labour: the outcome of the supreme art which veils itself in the achievement. His work is classical in the best sense of the word: classical in its nicety, purity, beauty of expression. If you take up Pope's *Essay on Criticism*—and I know of no more valuable aid to judgment on the subject with which it deals—and test Tennyson's work by the rules and precepts so admirably given there, you will find that they bear the test singularly well. To give one instance merely, I suppose there is no poet—I, at least, know of none—who has so felicitously carried out the rule, "the sound must seem an echo to the sense." Consider, for example, those lines in the *Princess*—

> "Sweeter thy voice; but every sound is sweet:
> Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawn.
> The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
> And murmuring of innumerable bees."

So much must suffice to indicate, in the briefest outline, and as if by a few strokes of the pencil, some of the reasons which lead me to think that Tennyson will survive as *the* English poet of our century. But my concern, this afternoon, is with what he has said rather than with his way of saying it; with his message rather than with his manner. I wish to put before you what, as it seems to me, was his chief lesson to his generation, and to the generations that should come after.

(II)

For poetry, which is really such, is something more than a pleasing play of fancy, an instrument of high intellectual enjoyment. There appears to be, at the present day, a superstition in certain quarters that poetry has nothing to do with moulding the manners and the morals of human society; that it has no influence over the religion, the philosophy, the passions of men. That seems to me a great error. I think Joubert uttered a profound truth when he observed that poetry should be the great study of the philosopher who would really know man. Consider the poety of ancient Greece, for example. It contains the thought of a whole people. The soul—yes, and the details of the life—of the Hellenic race are there. Hence it was, I suppose, that Aristotle was led to speak of poetry as "more philosophic and more seriously true than history." It is better fitted for the exposition of the higher verities. There can be no doubt that poetry is not only the most beautiful, but also the most legitimate and the easiest instrument of education, in the highest sense of the word. It is the most amiable means of building up character. And this the great poets have ever felt. "I wish to be considered a teacher or nothing," Wordsworth wrote. And assuredly such was the feeling of Tennyson. That verse of his, "Poets whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world," sums the matter up.

But we may go further than that, as, indeed, the

title which I have given to this Lecture indicates: "The Mission of Tennyson." Yes; I hold that every great poet has a mission, in the proper sense of the word. He is marked off from his fellows of the race of men by what Cicero calls, "magna et divina bona," great and divine endowments, which are distinct from temperament, from environment, from evolution, from heredity; which you cannot sum up in a formula, or explain by analysis; and as the highest and truest of which we must reckon what Krause calls *Schauen:* vision, intuition. He is a seer; the man whose eyes are opened; he speaks that which he knows, he testifies that which he has seen soaring in the high reason of his fancy. He speaks not of himself. Wordsworth has admirably expressed this in some lines of the *Prelude*—

> "Poets, even as Prophets, each with each
> Connected in a mighty scheme of truth,
> Have each his own peculiar faculty:
> Heaven's gift."

These words seem to me true to the letter, and worthy of being deeply pondered. They might well supply a theme for my whole Lecture. In passing, I may point out that Wordsworth himself affords a striking illustration of them. His divine gift, his peculiar faculty it was to draw out, as no poet had drawn out before, as no poet has drawn out since, the mystic sympathy between external nature and the soul of man; and to point to that path into the transcendental which we may find, by means of this, in the phenomena of the visible universe. There is, indeed,

as the old Greeks used to say, something inspired in all of us. Even ordinary virtue, which has the praise of men, is of divine inspiration, Plato teaches in the *Meno*. In all our best thoughts, our best works, surely we must be conscious, if we reflect, of a nonself which works with us and upon us. But it is the privilege and the peril of those gifted souls who alone can be called, in the highest sense, artists, to experience this influence in far ampler measure than the other sons of men. Hence the ancients regarded a kind of possession as their distinctive note. "Divine madness," Plato calls it, and Cicero, "poetic fury." And one of the deepest thinkers of these later times writes: "The artist, however full of design he is, yet, in respect of that which is the properly objective in his production, seems to stand under the influence of a power which separates him from all other men, and compels him to declare or represent things which he himself has not completely seen through, and whose import is infinite." Do you tell me that these words of Schelling are mysticism? I know they are. But I know, also, that they are true. And they are especially true of the poet. "Poets even as prophets." Yes; poets *are* prophets, in the proper sense of the word. "Messengers from the Infinite Unknown, with tidings to us direct from the Inner Fact of things." "We see not our prophets any more," lamented the Hebrew patriot at a dark period of the history of his people. A dark period, indeed: the darkest, surely, when the prophetic vision is quenched; when the prophetic word is mute; when not one is there that understandeth any more.

Yes: the poets of a nation are its true prophets; and indeed St. Paul, as you will remember, recognizes this when he speaks of one of the bards of Hellas as a prophet of their own. So a saintly man of these later days, the venerable Keble, in dedicating to Wordsworth those charming volumes of Prælections, speaks of him as truly a sacred seer: "viro vere vati sacro." And with reason. Assuredly, Wordsworth is, in some respects, the highest of modern prophets.

(III)

So much may suffice to vindicate the title of this Lecture, and to indicate the scope of it. I wish to speak this afternoon of the mission of Tennyson to his age. Now, the first gift required in any one who would teach his age is that he should understand it. Perhaps the great reason why the pulpit exercises so little influence, comparatively, among us, is that the vast majority of preachers are out of touch with the age. They occupy themselves Sunday after Sunday—to use a phrase of Kingsley's—in combating extinct Satans. Far otherwise was it with Tennyson. One of his most remarkable gifts was his acute sensibility to the intellectual and spiritual, the social and political developments of the times in which he lived. Wordsworth speaks of "the many movements" of the poet's mind. Few minds, perhaps, have moved so quickly, so far, and in so many directions, as Tennyson's. Nothing human was alien from him. It has been

remarked by one of his critics, "He is at once metaphysician and physicist, sceptic and theologian, democrat and aristocrat, radical and royalist, fierce patriot and far-seeing cosmopolitan; and he has revealed to the age the strange interaction of these varied characters, and how the beliefs and passions of each modify, and are modified by, those of all the others."

One of the most striking characteristics of the age has been the stupendous progress achieved by the physical sciences. I need not dwell upon what is so familiar. And, indeed, only an encyclopædia could deal even with the outlines of so vast a subject. But the spirit in which the physicist works has greatly contributed to our progress in provinces of the human intellect lying outside his domain. It has impressed upon the minds of men this great truth, that everywhere the way to knowledge is to go by the facts, testing, verifying, analyzing, comparing, inducting. And in proportion as this lesson has been laid to heart, by investigators of all kinds, have their researches been rich in real results. [Now, with this scientific movement, so eminently characteristic of our times, Tennyson was deeply in sympathy. I do not know that he was profoundly versed, as an expert, in any branch of physical science. But he followed from the first, with the closest attention, the achievements of the masters in all its fields.] And his verse teems with evidence of the completeness with which he had assimilated their teaching, and made it his own. Thus, to give one example merely, you remember those noble lines in *In Memoriam*, which so admirably

sum up the conclusion of an important chapter in geology—

> "There rolls the deep where grew the tree;
> O Earth, what changes thou hast seen!
> There where the long street roars hath been
> The stillness of the central sea.
>
> "The hills like shadows melt, they flow
> From form to form, and nothing stands;
> They fade like mists, the solid lands,
> Like clouds they shape themselves, and go."

But the vast progress of the physical sciences of which I have been speaking, and which appealed to Tennyson so powerfully, has not been unmixed gain —as he well knew. One result of it has been the establishment of a sort of dogmatism of physicists, not less oppressive than the old dogmatism of theologians. There has been a tendency, and more than a tendency, to assert that outside the boundaries of physical science we can know nothing; that its methods are the only methods of arriving at truth; a tendency to restrict our ideas to generalizations of phenomena, to erect experimental observation into the one criterion of certitude, to treat mental and moral problems as mere questions of physiology: in a word, to regard the laws of matter as the sole laws. And this has issued in the effacement, to a very great extent, of the true idea of law from the popular mind.

Let me explain what I mean. And here I would beg of you to favour me with your closest attention. For what I am immediately about to say—though I shall employ the simplest and least technical language

that the subject allows—will not be so easy to follow as a leading article in a newspaper, or a page in a novel. If, then, we keep strictly within the domain of physics, we have no right to speak of law at all. The mere physicist cannot get beyond ascertained sequences and co-ordinations of phenomena. A distinctive characteristic of law is necessity. And necessity—the notion we express by the word "must"—has no place in pure physics. Its place is taken by the word "is." In strictness, what the physicist calls natural laws, are merely hypotheses which have gradually won their way into general credit, by explaining all the facts known to us, by satisfying every test applied to them. They have not the character of absolute certainty. Only those laws are absolutely or metaphysically certain which are stamped upon all being, and therefore upon the human intellect: which are the very conditions of thought, because they are the conditions under which all things and all beings, even the Being of Beings, the Absolute and Eternal Himself, exist. I am far from denying—indeed, I strenuously affirm—that there is a sense in which necessity may be predicated of physical laws. But for that sense—nay, for the very notion of necessity—we must quit the proper bounds of physical science: we must pass to an order of verities transcending the physical; to what Aristotle called τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικὰ, to metaphysics; that is to say, to supersensuous realities, to the world lying beyond the visible and tangible universe. I need not go further into that now. I have said enough for my present purpose, which is that every physical truth is

necessarily connected with—or rather takes for granted —some metaphysical principle. Law is of the will and of the intellect. And will and intellect are not the objects of the physical sciences. "That which doth assign unto everything the kind, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the form and measure of working—the same we term a Law," says Hooker, summing up, in his judicious way, the Aristotelian and scholastic teaching on the matter. But the dreary dogmatism of a certain school of physicists has brought this august conception into discredit. I say "dreary dogmatism," for even the most highly endowed of the school which I have in view are open to this charge. To speak of one of the most considerable of them, for instance; the late Professor Huxley, so admirably clear and cogent and convincing when dealing with subjects within his own domain, becomes amazingly confused and incoherent and depressing in discussing purely philosophical questions. The general result of this dogmatism has been to diffuse widely a belief that there is nothing in the universe but matter and force, or, at all events, nothing that we can know; and that ascertained sequences or co-ordinations of phenomena are the only laws we can attain to. Hence it has come to pass that laws which are really such, have, in the eyes of a vast multitude, lost their true character. Thus we are told by a writer much in credit, that the laws of ethics are merely generalizations from experiences of utility: a doctrine the effect of which is to unlaw them—if I may borrow a word from Carlyle—for experiences of utility cannot

possibly do more than counsel: they can lay no necessity upon us to do what they indicate as desirable. But the essence of a moral law is necessity; is what Kant calls its categorical imperative, indicated by the word "ought." On the other hand, things are dignified as laws which are not laws at all in the proper sense of the word. For example, what are called laws of political economy are mere statements of probabilities of action by free agents, and imply no necessity.

I beg of you not for one moment to imagine that in insisting upon this matter I am indulging in mere logomachy, in unprofitable disputation about words. The question is concerning the idea of law—an idea of the utmost practical importance. The doctrine that "the universe is governed, in all things great and small, by law, and that law not the edict of mere will, but identical with reason, or its result," is no mere abstract speculation, that men may hold or reject, and be none the better or the worse for holding or rejecting it. It is a doctrine fraught with the most momentous consequences in all relations of human life. And that because of a reason set forth by Euripides more than two thousand years ago: I borrow Bishop Westcott's version of his words—

> "For 'tis by law we have our faith in Gods,
> And live with certain rules of right and wrong."

Law is, as Aquinas calls it, "a function of reason." Lose the true idea of law, and you derationalize the universe and reduce it to mere senseless mechanism. You lay the axe to the root of man's moral life here.

You shut off the vision of the Great Hereafter of which man's moral life here is the earnest and the pledge. And then is realized the picture which the great ethical poet of the last century has put before us—

> "Philosophy, that leaned on Heaven before,
> Shrinks to her second cause and is no more.
> Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires,
> And, unawares, morality expires.
> Nor public flame, nor private dares to shine,
> Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine.
> Lo, thy dread empire, chaos! is restored;
> Light dies before thy uncreating word.
> Thy hand, great Anarch, lets the curtain fall,
> And universal darkness buries all.'

(IV)

Now, it seems to me to have been Tennyson's mission to meet this tendency of the age of which I have been speaking by witnessing to, by insisting on, the true conception of law. That was the great work given him to do, in his day and generation, and to do in his own manner; not as a philosopher, not as a critic, not as a preacher, but as a poet. It is the lot of poets "to learn in suffering what they teach in song." Tennyson, as I have said, was emphatically of his age. And the physiological speculations wherewith physicists invaded the province of philosophy, and broke the dogmatic slumber of ancient orthodoxies, at one time troubled and perplexed him. But it may be truly said of him, as he said of his dead friend—

"He fought his doubts, and gathered strength,
He would not make his reason blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind,
And laid them ; thus, he came at length

"To find a firmer faith his own:
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone."

Let me indicate briefly how he found that firmer faith.

Tennyson possessed not only a most keen and sensitive mind, tremulously susceptible to the intellectual movements of his age; he possessed also the piercing vision, the direct intuition of the Prophet into the constitution and needs of human nature. He felt that the mechanical philosophy offered to him in the name of physical science was utterly inadequate to life. And he turned from the macrocosm to the microcosm; from the universe without him to the universe within him. He found in the laws of man's spiritual and moral being the solution of "the riddle of this painful earth." On those laws he based his Theistic belief, his ethical creed, and his political principles. Let me indicate this in the barest outline —it is all that is possible to me now—leaving you to fill in the details, if you think well to do so, by your own study of his works.

(V)

First, then, as to Tennyson's Theism. A thinker contemporary with him, but belonging to a very

different school, has remarked, "It is indeed a great question whether Atheism is not as philosophically consistent with the phenomena of the physical world, taken by themselves, as a doctrine of a creative and governing power." The term "Agnosticism" had not been invented when these words were spoken by John Henry Newman before the University of Oxford more than half a century ago. It appears to me to meet a distinct want. Littré defines an Atheist as one who does not believe in God. But the tendency of late years has been to narrow the meaning of the word; to confine it to those who expressly deny the Theistic conception. The word "Agnosticism" has been coined to describe the mental attitude of doubt, suspension of judgment, nescience regarding that conception. It applies more correctly than the word "Atheism" to a class, considerable not only from their numbers, but for their intellectual endowments and their virtues. It appeared to Tennyson that to shut us up in physical science, to confine our knowledge to matter and force, and ascertained sequences or co-ordinations of phenomena, is to doom us to Agnosticism. You remember the verses in which he has told us this. Familiar as they are, I shall venture to quote them. For they are as beautiful as they are familiar. Custom cannot stale them.

"That which we dare invoke to bless,
Our dearest faith, our ghastliest doubt,
He, They, All, One, within, without,
The Power in darkness, whom we guess.

"I found Him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye,

Or in the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun.

"If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,
I heard a voice 'Believe no more,'
And heard an ever breaking shore,
Which tumbled in the godless deep.

"A voice within the breast would melt,
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath, the heart
Rise up and answer, 'I have felt.'"

You see, he appeals to the laws of man's spiritual nature for light upon this momentous question; those first great spiritual laws, the denial of which is the essence of Agnosticism. Tennyson discerned with Spinoza that the primordial law of being is being; that the fundamental want of man is to prove, affirm, augment, his own life.

"'Tis life, whereof our nerves scant,
Oh, life, not death for which we pant,
More life and fuller that I want."

Man lives under the law of progress which is the striving after perfection, and of which the highest expression is the quest of the All-Perfect. Hence those "æthereal hopes," as Wordsworth speaks, which are part and parcel of us; "those mighty hopes which make us men," Tennyson calls them, in words which seem to me true to the letter. The intellect, as Plato teaches, testifies that the ideas of truth, goodness, beauty, justice, belong to an order of absolute principles, anterior and superior to man, and is compelled by an architectonic law of its own being, to refer the complete

realization of those principles to the Ultimate Reality, which it therefore contemplates as Τὸ Ἐρῶμενον the Altogether Lovely, the Object of all desire. Towards that Supreme Object, human nature tends; necessarily tends by virtue of the law written on the fleshly tables of the heart. Despite the limitations of his being, man tends towards the Infinite, because the Infinite is in him. The desire of the Infinite is, I say, a law under which he is born. He may resist, he may violate that law, as he may resist and may violate any other law of his being; for the eternal hands that made and fashioned him, while—

> ". . . binding nature fast in fate,
> Left free the human will."

This is his princely and perilous prerogative, the very essence of his personality, in virtue of which he is "man and master of his fate;" this is—

> ". . . that main miracle that thou art thou;
> With power on thine own act, and on the world."

But the law, whether obeyed or disobeyed, remains—witnessing to the Sovereign Good, the Everlasting Righteousness, the Supreme Object of Rational Desire which is the True End of man. Through "a dust of systems and of creeds," this vision of this Ineffable Reality shone out for Tennyson undimmed; the light of life to him, without which it were better to—

> ". . . drop headlong in the jaws
> Of vacant darkness, and to cease."

(VI)

Such was Tennyson's Theism. But it is on this great spiritual law of progress that his ethical creed also rested. The surest law of man's nature we must account it, according to that saying of Plato, "I find nothing more certain than this—that I *must* be as good and noble as I can." "*Must.*" Necessity is laid upon us. This is that law of which Butler speaks: "The law of virtue that we are born under." Tennyson has formulated it in his own way as being to—

> "Move upward, working out the beast,
> And let the ape and tiger die."

I find Tennyson peculiarly and completely English in his cast of thought. He is distinguished, in the highest degree, by what I regard as the dominant English characteristic—reverence for duty as the supreme law of life: the subordination of all ideals to the moral ideal. You remember how in one of his earliest poems—*Œnone*—he tells us—

> "Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
> These three alone lead life to sovereign power."

How he indicates us the rule of life—

> ". . . to live by law,
> Acting the law we live by without fear,
> And because right is right, to follow right."

The thought was always with him. But in the *Princess*, in the *Palace of Art*, and the *Vision of Sin*, he brings before us this law of life: a law in the proper

sense transcendental, as transcending the limits of space and time: a law of absolute universality, as are all moral laws that are strictly such: valid for all rational beings in all worlds. Again, in the *Idylls of the King*, this law is the dominant thought. Arthur, as I remember a famous German critic once remarked to me, is conscience made flesh and dwelling among us. And the primary precept of the heroic monarch to his glorious fellowship of the Table Round is to "reverence their conscience as their king." And, here I would remark in passing, how finely Tennyson has vindicated that higher law of the relations of the sexes, wrought into our civilization by Christianity, and embellished by chivalry, which contemporary Materialism burns to abrogate. With Tennyson the passion of sexual love, refined and idealized—humanized in a word—is a chief instrument of our ethical life: its office—

> ". . . not only to keep down the base in man,
> But teach high thoughts and amiable words,
> And love of truth, and all that makes a man."

(VII)

Once more. Those great ethical laws which dominate private life should, Tennyson held, be the laws of public life also; a truth much dimmed just now in the popular mind: nay, may we not say, well-nigh effaced from it? I was mentioning to an accomplished friend, a short time ago, that I had it in

intention[1] to write a book on *First Principles in Politics:* a sort of sketch of, or introduction to, the laws of human society. He replied, "My dear fellow, there are *no* first principles in politics, there are *no* laws of human society; it is all a matter of expediency, of utility, of convention, of self-interest." This is an expression of that lawlessness, that loss of the idea of law, whereof I spoke just now. And its last development in the public order is the doctrine which substitutes the caprice of the multitude for what Shakespeare calls "the moral laws of nature and of nations." Tennyson discerned, clearly enough, that this doctrine of the absolute and indefeasible authority of what is called "the people," that is, of the numerical majority of the adult males of a country, is really a doctrine of anarchy; that it means the triumph of the passions over the rational will; whereas the true theory of the state, whatever its form, means the triumph of the rational will over the passions. I cannot go into this matter further on the present occasion. But I may observe that Tennyson's political teaching from first to last seems to me perfectly consistent. I know of no difference *of principle* between *Locksley Hall* and *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*. At the end as at the beginning of his career, Tennyson was the loyal worshipper of Freedom, which he justly terms—

> ". . . loather of the lawless crown
> As of the lawless crowd."

[1] These words were spoken in 1896. The book has since been published, and I may note that some portion of the argument as to the true idea of law pursued in this Lecture finds place in its First Chapter.

Freedom, the very first condition of which is servitude to law. The years as they went by stripped him of many of his illusions, but they strengthened his grasp upon his principles.

This then was, as it seems to me, the Mission of Tennyson: to bring home to us the supremacy and universality of law. The exaltation of the materialist and positive element in life, the depreciation of the spiritual and moral element, is the special danger of our age: a danger arising out of its special greatness. There is one and only one antidote to this danger; the apprehension of law issuing from the nature of things which is rational; the first fact in the universe, though invisible, impalpable, imponderable: most real, indeed, because most spiritual. It seems to me that Tennyson has given us the groundwork of a philosophy of life which will never be overthrown, because it is based upon this eternal adamant. And his verse is a fitting vehicle for his august message. The dignity of his diction corresponds with the dignity of his doctrine. He possesses, in ample measure, that charm to quell the commonplace which we find in the great classics, and notably in the foremost poets of Greece and Rome. His poetry is a perpetual *Sursum Corda*—ever lifting up our hearts to what is noble and pure, and to the Eternal Source of all nobleness and all purity. He has told us in lines unsurpassed, as Taine thought, by any writer since Goethe, for calm and majesty, how "The old order changeth, giving place to the new." Yes; the old order changeth. We live amid "a dust of systems and of creeds."

Much has gone during the last hundred years which men once thought durable as the world itself. Much more is going. What is the prospect? To Tennyson one thing at all events was clear: that neither worthy life for the individual, nor social health for the body politic, is possible unless we live by something higher than ascertained sequences or co-ordinations of phenomena; unless we appeal to some holier spring of action than the desire of a remembered pleasure. "This ever changing world of changeless law," he sings in one of his poems. Amid the constant flux of all things, the law of the universe does not change. It is necessary, immutable, absolute, and eternal. Nor does the power of man's will change:

> "A power to make
> This ever changing world of circumstance,
> In changing, chime with never changing law."

III

A GRAND OLD PAGAN

(I)

THERE are few more striking personalities in the literary history of the nineteenth century than Walter Savage Landor. There are few more interesting volumes—to me, at least—than the eight in which Mr. Forster has given us his life and works. Not all his life, indeed. Some of the more disagreeable incidents of it have, very properly, been omitted or attenuated. And not all his works; for his Latin poems—some of them of extreme beauty—no place has been found in this collected edition, and some English compositions of, at all events, much vigour, are missing. But Mr. Forster, when he published his volumes, more than a quarter of a century ago, doubtless thought he had brought together as much of Landor as the public would want. And the event has proved that he was right. Their purchasers were not very numerous. Their readers were, probably, fewer still. I suppose most people who know anything about Landor owe their knowledge to the little work contributed by Mr. Sidney Colvin to the series of *English*

Men of Letters. An admirable little work it is, written with the sympathy which is the first condition of success in such an undertaking, and with the scholarship of which its accomplished author has made such full proof upon so many other occasions. Admirable, too, is the volume of *Selections*, also by Mr. Colvin, in the *Golden Treasury* series. But "melius est petere fontes quam sectari rivulos." And I should be curious to know how many readers there are of Landor's own volumes. Yet Mr. Colvin does not exaggerate when he says, "If there is any English writer who may be compared to Pascal for power and compression, for incisive strength and imaginative breadth together in general reflections, and for the combination of conciseness with splendour in their utterance, it is certainly Landor. "True Landorians," he adds, "may be counted on the fingers." I do not know whether I may claim to be numbered among that elect. But I remember vividly how I came under Landor's spell when I was an undergraduate at Cambridge, more years ago than I care to recall; and whenever I take up a volume of his now—as I frequently do—the spell is upon me as strongly as of old. Hence I am glad of the present opportunity to write something about him. I shall first speak of the Man. Then I shall discuss the claims of the Literary Artist. And lastly I shall endeavour to indicate the singularly high place which, in my judgment, he holds as a Critic.

(II)

Landor enjoyed the doubtful blessing of a very long life. Born in 1775, he survived till 1864, wearily enduring, when his fourscore years were passed, the doom which, in his own pathetic words, generally overtakes those who exceed the usual space of existence,

> "... the loss
> Of half their faculties, and half their friends."

From first to last his life was passed in storm and tempest. He had to leave his school at Rugby for libelling the headmaster in Latin verse. He went to Oxford, where he was known as "the mad Jacobin," and was rusticated for firing a charge of shot—"by way of a practical joke"—into rooms contiguous to his own. Next he quarrelled with his father—a good and indulgent father, apparently—and turned his back upon the paternal abode, as he declared, "for ever." When he came into his fortune, on his father's death in 1805, he purchased the Llanthony estate in Wales, and, in no short time, was engaged in bitter feuds with all his tenantry and all his neighbours, and, as his biographer expresses it, "turned the whole country side into a hostile camp." Then, after being involved in a labyrinth of lawsuits, he had to quit the country, a sadder but not a wiser man, leaving behind him his young bride, whom he had married after a few hours' acquaintance at a ball, and who found him the most trying of spouses. This was in 1814. In a year

Mrs. Landor, with a praiseworthy sense of wifely duty, determined to make another trial of conjugal life, and joined her husband at Tours. Then they went to Italy, and dwelt for three years at Como. Their residence there was brought to an end by what Mr. Colvin calls "a characteristic incident." "An Italian poet, one Monti, had written some disparaging verses against England. Landor instantly retorted with his schoolboy weapons, and printed some opprobrious Latin verses on Monti, who summoned him before the local courts on a charge of libel. Thereupon he wrote to threaten the magistrate with a thrashing. For this he was ordered to quit the country." He next established himself at Pisa, where he abode for three years in comparative peace. Thence he went to Florence. The eight years he spent there were full of quarrels with the British Embassy, the City Magistracy, and indeed with all the people of the place, for whose character and habits he conceived, and liberally expressed, a sovereign contempt. His landlord, a nobleman of ancient lineage, had the misfortune specially to displease him, and was violently expelled from his dwelling. In 1829 he left Florence for Fiesole, where, through the kindness of a friend of large fortune and literary tastes, he acquired the Villa Gherardesca, in the grounds of which was "The Valley of the Lilies," so pleasantly described by Boccaccio—one of his very favourite authors—in the *Decameron*. The beginning of his residence in this delightful spot was signalized by a violent quarrel with the Tuscan police, whom, on inviting their assistance for the recovery of some lost

plate, he had assured of his profound conviction that they were radically dishonest and hopelessly incompetent. It was the beginning of a trouble which ended in a police order expelling him from Tuscany, an order which, however, was practically cancelled through the intervention of the Grand Duke. He then engaged in a dispute with the owner of the neighbouring property about a right of water, which—a threatened duel being obviated by the judicious intervention of friends—resulted in protracted litigation, "the case being tried and retried in all the courts of Tuscany." In 1837 his home suffered another disruption. His wife, he said, made it unendurable to him. But the testimony of his own brother, who was devoted to him, shows that it was he, rather, who made the home unendurable to his wife. He came to England, and, after wandering about for some time, settled alone at Bath (1837). There "he found friends after his own heart, and lived for twenty years, passing, with little abatement of strength, from elderly to patriarchal age." Legal proceedings consequent upon a libel of a peculiarly atrocious kind, published by him against a lady who had offended him, caused him abruptly to quit that city in 1858. He betook himself to Florence, where he remained till his death in 1864. Among his latest visitors was Mr. Swinburne. Scholars will remember the singularly beautiful Greek verses prefixed to *Atalanta in Caledon*, in which the young poet —whose high gifts were just beginning to receive recognition—celebrated the memory of the deceased master. Hardly less beautiful is the single sentence

of English prose in which "with equal affection, reverence, and regret" he inscribes in front of his work "the highest of contemporary names."

Such, viewed from one side, is the brief epitome of Landor's life. But, curiously enough, it was a side the very existence of which he seemed never to suspect. I know of no more curious exhibition of self-ignorance than that which is afforded by his verses summing up his long career, as he conceived of it, when he was nearing its end—

> "I strove with none, for none was worth my strife;
> Nature I loved; and next to nature, art.
> I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
> It sinks, and I am ready to depart."

"I strove with none." He strove with every one. From first to last his attitude towards the human race was that of Goliath of Gath: "Give me a man, that we may fight together." I remember a lifelong friend of his, now no more, who said to me, "One of the things I am proudest of is that Landor and I never quarrelled; it was not for want of readiness on his part." An Achillean man we must account him; wrath the very essence of him; *impiger*, *iracundus*, *inexorabilis*, *acer*. From this point of view we can hardly regard him as completely sane. But, indeed, is any man completely sane? Is there not profound truth in the Stoic paradox *Omnes insanire?* To pursue that inquiry now would take us too far. Certain it is, however, that high intellectual gifts are ever accompanied by some want of intellectual balance. Pope well puts it—

"Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide."

Landor's irascibility was unquestionably abnormal. The Italians used to say of him, "Tutti gl' Inglesi sono pazzi; ma questo poi!" But beneath this morbid irascibility there lay many noble qualities and the kindest of hearts. The other three lines of his verse which I have just cited paint him veraciously. He was a true lover of Nature, and that in the widest sense. For her inanimate majesty and beauty he had a tender, a sort of personal affection, as his writings supply ample evidence. He delighted in children, and was delightful to them. "His feeling for the feminine," as Mr. Colvin demurely puts it, was ever strong. "My imagination," he wrote to Robert Browning, quite late in life, "has always been with the women, I mean the young, for I cannot separate that adjective from that substantive." I have no doubt that Browning echoed the sentiment, and thought it did his correspondent honour. Anyhow, from first to last, Landor fully exemplified the truth of the words, "Das ewig weibliche zeiht uns hinan." To the very end, talking nonsense to a pretty girl seemed to him the most delightful of occupations. Of the lower animals he was a great lover. Cruelty to them was, in his eyes, the chief of sins, if not the only sin. Field sports he gave up early in life. "It is hard to take away what we cannot give," he wrote, "and life is a pleasant thing—at least to birds. No doubt the young ones say tender things to one another, and even the old ones do not dream of death." During his eight sunny

years at Fiesole we hear much in his letters of "the great housedog Parigi, the cat Cincirillo, and of the difficulty of keeping him from the birds; of a tame marten, for whom, when he died, his master composed a feeling epitaph; of a tame leveret, and all manner of other pets." And what Landorian has not pictured to himself Pomero, the small white Pomeranian dog, with the eager bright eyes, who was the cherished companion and consoler of the old man's loneliness at Bath? There are hardly any of his letters written of that period without mention of Pomero. Take as a specimen the following extract from one addressed by him to Mr. Forster, after a brief absence from his house: "At six last night I arrived, and instantly visited Pomero *en pension*. His joy on seeing me amounted to madness. His bark was a scream of delight. He is now sitting on my head, superintending all I write, and telling me to give his love." "With Pomero," writes Mr. Sidney Colvin, in a charming page—which I must unfortunately abridge—"Landor would prattle in English and Italian, as affectionately as a mother with her child. Pomero was his darling, the wisest and most beautiful of his race. The two together, master and dog, were to be encountered daily on their walks about Bath and its vicinity, and there are many who perfectly well remember them: the majestic old man, looking not a whit the less impressive for his rusty and dusty brown suit, his bulging boots, his rumpled linen, or his battered hat; and his noisy, soft-haired, quick-glancing, inseparable companion."

Hardly less dear to Landor than his animal pets were trees and flowers. One of his earliest projects was to plant two million cedars on his estate at Llanthony. He would not fell a tree or pluck a flower unnecessarily. "Old trees," he writes, in his grand style, "are the only things that money cannot command. Rivers leave their beds, run into cities, and traverse mountains for it; obelisks and arches, palaces and temples, amphitheatres and pyramids rise up like exhalations at its bidding; even the free spirit of man—the only great thing on earth—crouches and cowers in its presence. It passes away and vanishes before venerable trees." And among his verses there are few more beautiful than those in which he has expressed his feeling about flowers. I agree with Mr. Colvin that their "delicacy and grave unobtrusive sweetness" have seldom been surpassed. Here are a few of them—

> "'Tis, and ever was, my wish and way
> To let all flowers live freely, and all die
> (Whene'er their Genius bids their souls depart)
> Among their kindred in their native place.
> I never pluck the rose: the violet's head
> Hath shaken with my breath upon its bank
> And not reproached it: the ever-sacred cup
> Of the pure lily hath between my hands
> Felt safe, unsoiled, nor lost one grain of gold.

Nor is this mere poetic rhapsody. He meant it. As Charles Dickens observed, "He always said and wrote his mind." There is a story worth recalling in this connection, of his having upon one occasion, at Fiesole, thrown his cook out of window in a paroxysm of wrathful displeasure. The man fell—no great

distance—upon a flowerbed. "Good God!" exclaimed Landor, "I forgot the violets!"

There is just one word more which I must say upon Landor's self-portraiture. He describes himself, in the verses quoted above, as loving art next to nature. And this is true. He did love art well—but not wisely. Here, as elsewhere, his practical judgment was at fault. I remember once expressing my admiration of a beautiful picture in the collection of that friend of his and mine mentioned just now—the one friend with whom he never quarrelled—who replied, "Yes, it is a charming little bit: Landor gave it to me; it is the only good picture he ever had." He was busy buying pictures all his life. But he seemed quite incapable of distinguishing a daub from a masterpiece. In his dealings with the dealers, as with the rest of the world, he displayed a singular incapacity for seeing facts. He was as far removed as is well conceivable from the Greek conception of the φρόνιμος: rather he was what Sophocles calls ἄπορος ἐπὶ φρόνιμα. His claim to have "warmed both hands before the fire of life" may, in a sense, be admitted. But it must be added that he sadly burnt his fingers in the process. And, no doubt, he was ready to depart when he wrote those lines. He confronted the King of Terrors with Stoic fortitude. He, too, had the conviction of the Roman poet, "Non omnis moriar." That the work accomplished by him in his sixty-eight years of literary activity would last as long as the English language, he never doubted. Of that work I go on to speak.

(III)

With his merely critical work I shall deal later on. Just now let us consider his contributions to pure literature.

It is a remark of his own: "The balance in which works of the highest merit are weighed, vibrates long before it is finally adjusted: even the most judicious men have formed injudicious opinions of the living." The balance in which Time has been weighing Landor's works has been vibrating for half a century. Perhaps it is now finally adjusted. At all events, this much is certain—that Landor holds a place assured and unique in English literature; the place anticipated in his own prophetic words: "I shall have as many readers as I desire to have in other times than ours: I shall dine late, but the dining-room will be well lighted; the guests few and select." Landor here displays a self-knowledge in which he was usually wanting, and a sounder judgment than that which was exhibited by many of his saner friends; a judgment which careful consideration of his writings amply warrants. Take his *Imaginary Conversations*, the most widely read, as I suppose, of his works during his lifetime. They possess in ample measure that "emphatic and declamatory eloquence" which Mr. Colvin claims for them. They are lighted up by the coruscations of that *non imitabile fulmen* which Southey describes Landor as wielding. They abound in passages which are most admirable specimens of majestic and opulent English.

They are pregnant with thought, clothed in the tersest and most expressive diction. The mellow wisdom of the antique world breathes through them. But all this appeals to the highly cultivated few. Is there in them that creative energy and that vivid picturesqueness which appeal to the uncultivated and half-cultivated many?

Some of the most considerable critics among his contemporaries thought there was. Thus Julius Hare affirmed that they contain creations comparable only to Sophocles or Shakespeare; and Hazlitt, that the historical figures they evoked were transformed with nothing short of the very truth and spirit of history itself. Well, we may now confidently say that Julius Hare and Hazlitt were wrong. Landor's genius was not creative, neither was it historical. I remember a highly gifted and highly irreverent undergraduate at Cambridge likening the *Imaginary Conversations* to the talk of the ventriloquist who converses with himself in the Punch and Judy show. It is not a similitude which I should use; but, at all events, it adumbrates a truth. Landor's speakers all think the same kind of thoughts and employ the same kind of language. There is no real give and take in their utterances; there is no dramatic element. It could not be otherwise with Landor's intense egoism, or, as Mr. Forster euphemistically puts it, "strong sense of his own individuality." The speaker, whether he bears the name of Cicero or Pericles, of Plato or Diogenes, of Penn or Peterborough, is really Landor, and does but develop the characteristics of Landor's

mind. Now, Landor's mind was cast in an antique mould. He was, as I shall have occasion to observe later on, a classic born out of due time; and hence, no doubt, it is that, as Wordsworth remarked, his classical conversations are the best. The modern ones are inferior just in proportion to their modernity. Take, for example, the conversation between Pitt and Canning, which I could wish, for Landor's sake, had been consigned by his editor to oblivion. Even the conversation between Bossuet and the Duchesse de Fontagnes, one of Louis XIV.'s girl mistresses, which Mr. Forster so much admires, seems to me frigid and forced. How false a note is that which he strikes when he makes her say, "His Majesty held my hand and sat still, when he might have romped with me and kissed me." Romped! Imagine the Grand Monarque, even in his small clothes and without his periwig, romping! And that at the mature age which he had attained, when he had made Marie Angélique a Duchess.

I freely concede, or, rather, strenuously maintain, that everywhere, or almost everywhere, in the *Imaginary Conversations*, there are fine passages. For example, in this of Bossuet and the Duchesse de Fontagnes, now before me, how austerely grand are some sentences which are put into the Bishop's mouth:—

"We say that our days are few, and saying it we say too much. Marie Angélique, we have but one; the past are not ours, and who can promise us the future? This in which we live is ours only while we live in it. The next moment may

strike it from us. The next sentence I would utter may be broken and fall between us. The beauty which has made a thousand hearts to beat at one instant, at the succeeding has been without pulse and colour, without admirer, friend, companion, follower. She by whose eyes the march of victory shall have been directed, whose name shall have animated armies at the extremities of the earth, drops into one of its crevices and mingles with its dust."

Very fine indeed is this, though it is not Bossuet.

It is then, I think, precisely because Landor's genius is neither creative nor historic, that he will always appeal to a small circle of readers, as he himself anticipated—"fit audience, but few." I have been speaking specially of his *Imaginary Conversations*, but the same judgment holds good of all his longer poems. The most considerable of these is *Gebir*, of which Southey, and, what is more significant, Shelley, were enthusiastic admirers. And so were Wordsworth, Charles Lamb, and many other of the greatest of that time. I wonder how many people now admire it as they did, and prove their admiration by perusing it as they did. In such matters one must judge for oneself and think for oneself. The authority of great names avails little. For myself then, I frankly own that, very sensible as I am of the exquisite workmanship in *Gebir*, I have always found it difficult to read. Nor does the difficulty decrease with every fresh perusal. Lately, I put the poem into the hands of a friend who has a fine taste in English literature, and he read it carefully and conscientiously through. "What do you make of it?" I asked, when he had

finished. "I am searching for an epithet," he replied. I suggested "Magniloquent." "Well," he rejoined, "I should rather say stilted; but it contains noble lines." No doubt it does contain noble lines. "Fine-sounding passages," to quote Charles Lamb, there are in all Landor's longer poems. There are, indeed, many such. But there is no beating pulse of life in them; there is no strongly impressed and strongly impressing character. Landor's own theory was that in poetry the passions should be "naked, like the heroes and the gods." He has laboured with much skill so to represent them, and, in a way, he has succeeded. But he has given us nude statues. They are most carefully chiselled after the noblest classical originals; but they are cold, they are colourless, they are not flesh and blood; and so they appeal only to the few—to those who possess minds cultivated and prepared to appreciate them: who are able to look at them in the same way as that in which trained æsthetic eyes survey and understand the Farnese Hercules or the Belvedere Apollo.

But if from Landor's longer poems we turn to the shorter, our judgment, as it seems to me, must be very different. In these less ambitious productions, he has attained a very high degree of excellence; and it is a kind of excellence which may be appreciated without the special culture needed to appreciate such a work as *Gebir*. I do not think he has been surpassed by any English poet in what may properly be called eidyllia; epigrams, the old Greeks termed them; "carvings, as it were, on ivory or gems," to use his

own most happy phrase. I will give a few specimens of them. What can be prettier in its way than this to a child?—

"Pout not, my little Rose, but take
With dimpled fingers, cool and soft,
This posy when thou art awake.
Mama has worn my posies oft.

"This is the first I offer thee,
Sweet baby! Many more shall rise
From trembling hands, from bended knee,
Mid hopes and fears, mid doubts and sighs.

"Before that hour my eyes will close,
But grant me, Heaven, this one desire
In mercy, may my little Rose
Never be grafted on a briar."

Great favourites of mine are the following verses on Catullus:—

"Tell me not what too well I know
About the Bard of Sirmio;
Yes, in Thalia's son,
Such strains there are as when a Grace
Sprinkles another's laughing face
With nectar, and runs on."

In a different vein does the muse celebrate the Duke of York's statue:—

"Enduring is the bust of bronze,
And thine, O flower of George's sons,
Stands high above all laws and duns.
As honest men as ever cart
Conveyed to Tyburn, took thy part,
And raised thee up to where thou art."

And now I will give four lines which I think Landor never surpassed; a regal compliment paid in perfect verse:—

"*Why do I smile?* To hear you say,
'*One month, and then the shortest day!*'
The shortest, whate'er month it be,
Is the bright day you pass with me."

Regal, too, are the complimentary strains in which he celebrates Lady Hamilton, though they exhibit less completely the *ars celare artem*:—

"Long have the Syrens left their sunny coast,
The Muse's voice, heard later, soon was lost.
Of all the Graces, one remains alone,
Gods call her Emma, mortals Hamilton."

I must not omit to cite certain verses on Lord Melville,—they were probably suggested, I may observe, by a saying of "Touchstone" in *As You Like It*—which Mr. Colvin considers the most weighty and pointed of all Landor's epigrams:—

"God's laws declare
Thou shalt not swear,
By aught in Heaven above or earth below.
'Upon my honour,' Melville cries,
He swears and lies.
Does Melville then break God's commandment? No."

I will next quote something of another kind, which may help, so to speak, to take away the taste of this *sacra indignatio*. Was anything more exquisite in its kind ever written than the following inscription for a statue of Love?—

"Mild may he be, and innocent to view,
Yet who on earth can answer for him? You
Who touch the little God, mind what you do.

"Say not that none has cautioned you; although
Short be his arrow, slender be his bow,
The king Apollo never wrought such woe."

The last example of Landor's smaller verse which I can give, and I have a special reason for giving it, is a quite perfect translation—so it seems to me—of a well-known passage in Moschus :—

> "Ah! when the mallow in the croft dies down,
> Or the pale parsley or the crisped anise,
> Again they grow, another year they flourish.
> But we, the great, the valiant and the wise,
> Once covered over in the hollow earth,
> Sleep a long, dreamless, unawakening sleep."

I remember a critic who enjoyed a great reputation —he is now no more, and I will not mention his name —complaining of Landor's "laboured artificiality." It is a most unhappy phrase. Landor's style is in the truest sense natural. It is part and parcel of him; the expression of the personal qualities specific to him, that is, of his genius. It is his proper literary manner: and manner is the transpiration of character. He wrote as he did because he was what he was. Steeped in the literature of Greece and Rome—especially Rome —he thinks after the manner of that antique world, and writes in its manner. It was more real to him than the world in which he lived. In extreme old age, when his memory was failing, he would sometimes be at a loss for an English word, but never for a Latin one. Mr. Forster speaks happily when he says: "In Landor we have antiquity itself rather than the most scholarly and successful presentment of it." I cited, just now, his English rendering of certain very beautiful verses of Moschus. I will now ask the reader whose Greek is sufficient for these things, to compare it with the original.

Αἴ, αἴ, ταὶ μαλάχαι μὲν ἐπὰν κατὰ κᾶπον ὄλωνται,
Ἢ τὰ χλωρὰ σέλινα, τό, τ' εὐθαλὲς οὖλον ἄνηθον,
Ὕστερον αὖ ζώοντι, καὶ εἰς ἔτος ἄλλο φύοντι·
Ἄμμες δ', οἱ μεγάλοι καὶ καρτεροὶ ἢ σοφοὶ ἄνδρες,
Ὁππότε πρᾶτα θάνωμες, ἀνάκοοι ἐν χθονὶ κοίλᾳ
Εὕδομες εὖ μάλα μακρὸν ἀτέρμονα νήγρετον ὕπνον.

I venture to say that Landor's lines are as utterly Greek in ethos as are those of the Greek poet himself.

"That Grand Old Pagan," Carlyle called him, aptly enough. The eighteen centuries of Christianity hardly existed for him. It would be difficult to find a passage in his writings which displays one specifically Christian aspiration, emotion, or sentiment. He protests, indeed, that he is "not indifferent to the benefits that literature has, on many occasions, derived from Christianity." But his own feeling was, as he expressed it, that "mythologies should be kept distinct." A faint possible Theism seems to have constituted his own creed. "When we go beyond the unity of God," he writes, "who can say where we shall stop? The human mind is then propelled into infinite space, and catches at anything from a want of rest."

(IV)

It remains to speak of Landor as a literary critic. Pope begins his *Essay on Criticism* by declaring—

> "'Tis hard to say, if greater want of skill
> Appear in writing or in judging ill."

I do not pretend to decide the question which Pope leaves unsolved. But I have always held that sound

literary critics are far less numerous than sound men of letters. In fact, the critic is, as often as not, an unsound man of letters, and an unsuccessful. So it was in Pope's day, and so it is in our own :—

> "Some have at first for wits, then poets past,
> Turn'd critics next, and proved plain fools at last."

But when we charge our critics with folly, we have not said the worst of them. A man cannot help being a fool. We must hold—in spite of Determinists—that he can help being a knave. Now, unquestionably, knavish tricks are the stock-in-trade of an exceeding great multitude of critics of the smaller kind. How common it is, for example, to find them passing judgment upon books which they evidently have not read. I remember pointing out to one such that he had attributed to an author precisely the contrary of what that author had written. "Why, you can't have turned over the pages of the work!" I exclaimed. "Well," he replied, "I smelt it." But even the better kind of critics are often very slenderly equipped with the qualifications necessary for their task. A passage in which Landor animadverts upon the ways of "our reviewers and magazine men," is unfortunately as true now as when it was written.

"To discover a truth and to separate it from a falsehood, is surely an occupation worthy of the best intellect, and not at all unworthy of the best heart. Consider how few of our countrymen have done it, or attempted it, on works of criticism; how few of them have analyzed and compared. Without these two processes there can be no sound judgment

on any production of genius. We are accustomed to see the beadle limp up to the judge's chair; to hear him begin with mock gravity, and to find him soon dropping it for his natural banter. He condemns with the black cap on; but we discover, through its many holes and dissutures, the uncombed wig. Animosity, or perhaps something more ignoble, usually stimulates rampant inferiority against high desert."

Now Landor himself possessed, in a remarkable degree, most of the qualities necessary for a literary critic—vast knowledge, refined taste, incorruptible honesty, and sound sense when his masterful prejudices did not thwart it. And it is in the domain of literary criticism that some of his best work was done. I say *literary* criticism, for in other departments his judgments are of small value. In politics, for example, his opinions are a curious medley of schoolboy Liberalism, aristocratic Republicanism, and autocratic egotism. I remember only one political dictum in the whole of his works worth quoting, but that one, indeed, is of the highest value: "A mob is not worth a *man*." So, in matters pertaining to religion, his utterances are singularly inept. How should it have been otherwise when, as I pointed out just now, he surveyed the modern world, in which we live and act, from the standpoint of antique paganism? Christianity is for him simply a system of morality: its mystical element, its transcendental side, he ignores, or dismisses, like the Greeks in St. Paul's time, as foolishness. Nay, of its Founder he makes small account. "It appears to me," he says, in the person of one of his puppets, "that there was more Christianity before Christ than

there has been since." Similarly, in philosophy, he is like a blind man with a looking-glass. He sees nothing in it. He does not even know what it is. "This is philosophy," he declares, "to make remote things tangible, common things extensively useful, useful things extensively common." Now, this is no more philosophy than it is geometry. And so, in one of his *Imaginary Conversations*, by way of rebuke to Plato, whom he had indeed read, but without the seeing eye or the understanding heart, he makes Diogenes say, "I meddle not at present with infinity or eternity; when I can comprehend them I will talk about them:" a saying which luminously reveals the limitations of his own mind.

Far otherwise is it when we come to the domain of pure literature. Here Landor speaks as one having authority, and not as the scribes of superficial shibboleths. Occasionally, indeed, passion and prejudice blind his vision and pervert his words. But even then it is worth while to listen to him, for there is always a reason, though it be a perverted reason, for what he says. His very mistakes in things literary he might have called in Dante's phrase, "i miei non falsi errori." I suppose what we should now count among the most conspicuous of his mistakes is his according so high a place to Southey. He ranked him not only above Byron, but above Wordsworth also. "Wordsworth," he declared, "has not written three poems so excellent as *Thalaba*, *The Curse of Kehama*, and *Roderick*." At the present time, we may venture to say, confidently, that this judgment is

wrong. But it is well to remember that Landor held it in common with some of the most eminent of his day and generation. I remember Cardinal Newman expressing himself to me very similarly. Southey had unquestionably high gifts. Perhaps we undervalue him as much as his contemporaries overvalued him. For myself, I confess I agree with Mr. Forster: "Besides many minor poems, which will live with the language, and ballads which are masterpieces of fantastic beauty, the longer poems would seem to have fallen into unmerited neglect. . . . It is certain that for many subtle and pleasing varieties of rhythm, for splendour of invention, for passion and incident sustained often at the highest level, and for all that raises and satisfies wonder and fancy, there will be found in *Thalaba, Kehama*, and *Roderick* passages of unrivalled excellence ('perfect,' even Byron thought)." To this let me add that Landor's heart had been won by Southey's enthusiastic admiration of and unsparing devotion to himself. He was a no less good lover than hater. And here I must introduce a most characteristic extract from a letter of his to Mr. Forster, written in 1845. He was then seventy, it will be remembered:—

"A lady here, a friend of yours, has been lecturing me on my hostility to Wordsworth. In the course of our conversation I said what I turned into verse half an hour ago, on reaching home. No writer, I will again interpose, before transcribing them, has praised Wordsworth more copiously or more warmly than I have done; and I said not a syllable against him until he disparaged his great friend and greatest

champion, Southey. You should be the last to blame me for holding the heads of my friends to be inviolable. Whoever touches a hair of them I devote *diis inferis, sed rite.*"

So much—too much, perhaps—as to Southey. For the rest, Landor's literary judgments are almost always as sound as they are admirably expressed, whether he treats of English, French, or Italian writers, or of Greek and Roman. Of all his *Imaginary Conversations* those included by Mr. Forster in the fourth volume, under the title of *Literary Men*—a vile phrase, by the way—delight me most, and especially the Southey and Porson, the Abbé Delille and Walter Landor, the Milton and Marvel, the Johnson and John Horne Tooke, the Southey and Landor Dialogues. The reader who has any taste for "the dainties that are bred in a book," may satisfy it to the full in these admirable compositions. What can be better than this upon the two chief immortals of English literature? "A great poet represents a great portion of the human race. Nature delegated to Shakespeare the interests and direction of the whole. To Milton was given a smaller part, but with plenary power over it; and such fervour and majesty of eloquence were bestowed on him as on no other mortal in any age." And how striking—though we may find it a trifle hyperbolical—is the sentence with which he concludes: "A rib of Shakespeare would have made a Milton; the same portion of Milton all poets born ever since." I add, parenthetically, that notwithstanding this magnificent eulogy, Landor was no indiscriminating admirer even of the most illustrious.

He holds—to cite his own words—that while abasing our eyes in reverence to so great a man as Milton, we should not close them. And in some exceedingly acute pages he points out the blemishes of the mighty master who so strongly appealed to him: how strongly may be gathered from his own testimony:—

"At line 297 [of *Paradise Lost*, Book IV.] commences a series of verses so harmonious that *my ear is impatient of any other poetry for several days after I have read them.* I mean those which begin—

'For contemplation he, and valour formed,
For softness she, and sweet attractive grace.'

and ending with—

'And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay.'"

It is difficult to tear oneself away from these fascinating pages. But, in truth—to use a phrase of Southey's—felicities flash from Landor whenever he uses his pen as a critic. What could be better than this: "In Wordsworth's poetry there is as much of prose as there is of poetry in the prose of Milton"? Or this, on Tennyson's *Maud:* "What other (than Tennyson) could have written this verse—worth many whole volumes—'the breaking heart that will not break'? Infinite his tenderness, his thought, his imagination; the melody and softness, as well as the strength and stateliness of his verse"? Or this on Swift: "What a writer! Not the most imaginative or the most simple, not Bacon or Goldsmith, had the power of saying more forcibly or completely whatever

he meant to say"? Or this on Johnson: "His turgidity was not affected; it was the most natural part of him"? Admirable, too, and original, are those words of his concerning the Bible: "A book which, to say nothing of its holiness and authority, contains more specimens of genius than any other volume in existence."

But Landor's critical faculty was employed as happily on Greek and Roman literature, on Italian and French, as on English. I am not sure, by the way, that I should say French. There his prejudices, to some extent at all events, marred his work. He disliked the French people. They had falsified the hopes which, like so many ardent spirits, he had entertained of their Revolution. And their language, with all its elegance and prettiness, did not appeal to him. He found it wanting in strength and stateliness, as, indeed, it is. Pre-eminently the tongue of social intercourse, it is ill-adapted for lofty thought or deep emotion. Landor went so far as to apply to it the epithet "miserable." Pascal, he held, was great in despite of it. But in the language and literature of Italy he delighted. It was not until he was in middle life that he learnt Italian. He acquired it very slowly, and at first astonished his hearers by the oddities of his pronunciation and speech. But, at the last, he mastered it thoroughly, and spoke and wrote it with the utmost correctness and, indeed, elegance. Some of his Italian verses possess a high degree of excellence, and his criticisms on the masters of Italian literature are models of delicate and acute perception. I suppose

Boccaccio, the precursor of the New Paganism, appealed to him most strongly—as was natural. "In the vivacity and versatility of imagination, in the narrative, in the descriptive, in the playful, in the pathetic, the world never saw his equal, till the sunrise of our Shakespeare. The human heart through all its foldings vibrates to Boccaccio." Such is Landor's judgment on that fascinating writer. I think it substantially true, although, of course, his demerits are as conspicuous as his merits. On Petrarch, or Petrarca, as he chose to call him—wrongly, as it seem to me, for an English tradition of half a dozen centuries is not to be set aside for mere euphony—he has many admirable pages. As a specimen of how much he could express in fewest words, take the following sentence, in which ends what he has to say upon the poet's most beautiful *Triumph of Death:* "He who, the twentieth time, can read unmoved this *canzone*, never has experienced a love which could not be requited, and never has deserved a happy one." With Dante he is less in sympathy. How should he have had much fellow-feeling with the great poet of Catholicism, the spokesman of the Middle Ages? Still, he has left us much lucid and suggestive criticism of this supreme master: pages which no student of the *Divine Comedy* can afford to neglect. How completely he fell at times under the spell of that great enchanter one short extract may suffice to show:—

"All the verses that were ever written on the nightingale

are scarcely worth the beautiful triad of this divine poet on the lark :—

> 'La lodoletta che in aere si spazia,
> Prima cantando, e poi tace contenta,
> Dell' ultima dolcezza che la sazia.'

In the first of them, do you not see the twinkling of her wings against the sky? As often as I repeat them my ear is satisfied, my heart (like hers) contented."

To deal adequately with Landor's criticism of Greek and Roman authors would require a volume. Here I can only mention his admirable paper on Catullus, quite the best thing ever written, so far as I know, upon this most graceful and winning of the Latin poets—who, by the way, is something more than graceful and winning: Landor rightly claims, "he often is pathetic, and sometimes is sublime." But I must remark in conclusion that Landor, unlike many admirable scholars, could make good use of the things new and old stored in the rich treasury of his mind. He was more than a scholar: he was a thinker, and his reading of the lessons which his learning had taught him is often excellent. As an instance of this—not the best indeed, but the shortest which occurs to me—take the following passage :—

"It is very amusing to trace the expressions of different nations for the same thing. What we half a century ago called to *banter*, and what, if I remember the word, I think I have lately heard called to *quiz*, gives no other idea than that of coarseness and inurbanity. The French convey one of buzz and bustle in *persiffler*; the Italians, as naturally, one

of singing, and amusing and misleading the judgment, by *canzonare*, or as Boccaccio speaks, *uccellare;* the Athenians knew that the graces and childhood had most power of this kind upon the affections, and their expressions were χαριεντίζειν and παιδεύειν."

IV

A FRENCH SHAKESPEARE

(1)

I SUPPOSE the time has at last arrived when the position of Honoré de Balzac in the literature of his country may be considered as permanently fixed. The dictum of the ancient sage, "Call no man happy before his death," applies with peculiar force to the writers of books. Nothing is more untrustworthy than the estimate of an author formed by his contemporaries—even by the most clear-sighted and highly gifted of them. Nothing more strikingly illustrates human fallibility than the gradual modifications often observable in such estimates, modifications not unfrequently amounting, in the long run, to a complete revolution of opinion. Take Sainte-Beuve for example: and assuredly he is a signal example of a man uniting in a high degree the endowments which are the requisite equipment of those who aspire—

> "to give and merit fame,
> And justly bear a critic's noble name."

Soundness of judgment, refinement of taste, power of intellectual diagnosis, and delicacy of touch were his in ample measure; in no less ample measure in 1834 than in 1852. And yet what a difference had come over his estimate of Balzac in those eighteen years! The earlier criticism[1] amounts to little more than this, that the great novelist is a clever charlatan. It describes him as a magnetizer, an alchemist of thought, the professor of an occult science, "equivocal, notwithstanding his proofs,"—and among the "proofs" then before the world, it should be remembered, were some of his greatest works, *Eugénie Grandet*, *La Recherche de l'Absolu*, *Le Médecin de Campagne*, *Le Colonel Chabert*, *Gobseck*,—"with a talent often startling and fascinating, not less often questionable and illusory." And, again, "In the invention of a subject, as in the details of his style, M. de Balzac's pen is facile, unequal, risky; he makes his start, proceeds for a while at an easy foot-pace, breaks out into a gay gallop, and lo! all at once down he comes: then picks himself up and jogs on again until his next tumble." And once more: "As a literary artist, M. de Balzac is wanting in purity and simplicity, in precision and definiteness. He retouches his outlines and overloads them: his vocabulary is incoherent and exuberant; his diction is ebullient and fortuitous; his phraseology is physiological; he affects terms of science, and runs every risk of the most motley assortment of colours." Let us now turn to the criticism

[1] It appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of November, 1834, and is republished in *Portraits Contemporains*, vol. ii.

which appeared eighteen years later.[1] Here we find Balzac characterized as certainly the most inventive, and among the most fecund, in his walk of literature; his "rich and luxuriant nature," "his excellence in depicting character," "the manifold skill, the delicate and powerful seductions," which make his works a "rich and varied heritage," are fully acknowledged; and his style is pronounced to be "fine, subtle, flowing, picturesque, and boldly original." Sainte-Beuve's later estimate was the sounder, and it is the more creditable to him to have formed and expressed it, because, not to speak of his personal reasons—and they were good reasons—for regarding Balzac unfavourably, the minds of the two men were cast in very different moulds, and their tastes formed upon quite other standards. But, curiously enough, the first clear recognition of Balzac's true rank in French literature proceeded from one even further removed from him than was Sainte-Beuve, in genius, character, and sympathies. It is not easy to exaggerate the loathing with which the horrible pictures of depravity, the nude expositions of vice in the *Comédie Humaine*, must have filled the pure soul of Lamartine, "most chaste, most divine of French poets," as he has been happily called. Yet he judged its author—and the judgment was received with a storm of indignation—to be superior to Molière in fecundity, although

[1] In the *Constitutionnel* of September 2, 1852. It is reprinted in the second volume of the *Causeries du Lundi*. It must not be supposed that this article is unqualified eulogy. Sainte-Beuve's recognition of merit, always discriminating, is something more than discriminating when there is question of Balzac.

inferior in literary style.[1] The storm has long passed away, but the judgment remains, and Time has set his seal to it. Balzac's place among the classics of France is securely established as the greatest master of romantic fiction his country has produced: and his supremacy is not merely French but European. It is not too much to affirm of him that he is, in his own domain, what Tacitus is among historians, Michael Angelo in the arts of design, and Dante among poets. Indeed, in the truest sense of the word, all three of these great masters are poets. For what is poetry but creation; its essence the power of producing or reproducing living beings, not merely as true as those of the world of experience, but a great deal truer? In the mere mechanism of diction, Balzac is, of course, as far as possible removed from Tacitus. Laboured expansion is the main note of the one, laboured conciseness of the other. But in realistic power, in the skill with which the movements of the mind and the passions are exhibited working under the veil of social phenomena, in the cold, scientific exposition of the terrible truth of things, there exists as striking a resemblance between the two writers, as there exists between the civilizations which they set themselves

[1] I take it that the general estimate of Balzac's style is much higher now than was possible in Lamartine's time, when the old classical, and, if I may say so, somewhat pedantic tradition was still in full force. It would be impertinent for an Englishman to speak in any but the most diffident tone upon such a question. I will therefore merely refer to Taine's admirable pages on "Le Style de Balzac" in his *Nouveaux Essais* (pp. 98–116), where the conclusion arrived at is "Évidemment cet homme savait sa langue; même il la savait aussi bien que personne: seulement il l'employait à sa façon."

to paint. Nay, they have in common many of the same faults. There is in both the same crudity of colouring, the same obscurity of thought, the same redundance of ideas, the same lack of simplicity and ease. "Tacite creuse dans le mal," observes Fénelon. The same may be said of Balzac. Nor is the analogy between Balzac and Michael Angelo less real and striking. Both were anatomists of supreme excellence —the one of the body politic, the other of the corporal frame. And, in both, profound knowledge was united to and subserved a marvellous gift of idealization, whence resulted those colossal types, whose effect upon the mind is such as no servile copying of the living model, no direct imitation of the seen and actual, can ever produce. There can be no question of the excesses into which Michael Angelo's science led him—excesses patent to the most superficial critics and inimical to the popular appreciation of his greatness. Balzac's excesses are of exactly the same kind. To the parallel which exists between Balzac and Dante I shall have occasion to return hereafter. I here merely note that the gifts which enabled the novelist to body forth the terrestrial Inferno[1] of nineteenth-century France, closely resemble those which inspired the medieval bard to recount what he had seen among the nations of the dead. It has been happily observed by Lord Macaulay: "The

[1] "Ce Paris, qualifié d'antichambre de l'enfer, ce qui est vrai pour bien des gens, même pour les écrivains qui le décrivent."—*Letter to the Abbé Eglé: Œuvres*, vol. xxiv. p. 403. My references are made to the *Édition Définitive*, Paris, 1869–76.

great source of the power of the *Divine Comedy* is the strong belief with which the story seems to be told. . . . When we read Dante, the poet vanishes —we are listening to the man who has returned from the 'valley of the dolorous abyss,' we seem to see the dilated eye of horror, to hear the shuddering accents with which he tells his fearful tale." "On a répété à outrance," Chasles remarks, "que M. de Balzac était un observateur, un analyste; c'était mieux ou pis; c'était un voyant." And so Sainte-Beuve—

"Balzac was, so to speak, inebriated with his work. From his youth up, he lived in it and never left it. That world, half the result of observation, half of creation, in all senses of the word, those persons of all sorts and conditions whom he had endowed with life, were confounded for him with the world and the persons of real life. The men and women of the external world were but a pale copy of his own creations whom he used to see, to quote, to talk with, upon every occasion, as acquaintances of his own and yours. So powerfully and distinctly had he clothed them with flesh and blood, that once placed and set in action, he and they never left one another. They all encompassed him, and in moments of enthusiasm would circle about him, and drag him into that immense round of the *Comédie Humaine*, which, but to look at in passing, makes us dizzy, an effect that its author was the first to experience."[1]

[1] *Causeries du Lundi*, vol. ii. p. 451. His sister, Madame Surville, writes :—

"Il nous contait les nouvelles du monde de *La Comédie Humaine*, comme on raconte celles du monde véritable.

"Savez-vous qui Félix de Vandenesse épouse? Une demoiselle de Grandville. C'est un excellent mariage qu'il fait là : les Grandville sont riches, malgré ce que mademoiselle de Bellefeuille a coûté à cette famille.

Dante, as we read, grew lean over his *Divine Comedy*. Balzac wrote his *Comédie Humaine* "not only with his thought, but with his blood and with his muscles,"[1] and died at fifty, his robust frame absolutely worn out by the prodigality of his intellectual toil.

(II)

Such then by general, I do not of course say universal, consent would appear to be the position of Honoré de Balzac in the literature of France. The most inventive brain which his country has ever produced, he holds, in this respect, among French writers the place which Shakespeare holds among ourselves. Perhaps, indeed, it is not temararious to assert that he is, upon the whole, the nearest approach to a Shakespeare, the best substitute for one, that the genius of his country allows. But the point of resemblance between him and Shakespeare with which I am more particularly concerned in this Study, and

"Si quelquefois nous lui demandions grâce pour un jeune homme en train de se perdre ou pour une pauvre femme bien malheureuse dont le triste sort nous intéressait :

"Ne m'étourdissez pas avec vos sensibleries, la vérité avant tout ; ces gens là sont faibles, inhabiles, il arrive ce qui doit arriver, tant pis pour eux !

"Il chercha longtemps un parti pour Mademoiselle Camille de Grandlieu, et rejetait tous ceux que nous lui proposions.

"Ces gens ne sont pas de la même société, le hasard seul pourrait faire ce mariage, et nous ne devons user que fort sobrement du hasard dans nos livres : la réalité seule justifie l'invraisemblance ; on ne nous permet que le possible, à nous autres !"—*Œuvres*, vol. xxiv. p. xxxix.

[1] "Il n'écrit pas seulement avec sa pure pensée, mais avec son sang et ses muscles."—*Causeries du Lundi*, vol. ii. p. 448.

which brings me to my proper subject, is not invention. Shakespeare is not merely the great poet of human nature in all time. He is also the most faithful exponent of English life in the sixteenth century. From this point of view, his works are documents of history possessing the highest value. It was the work of this supreme intellect, among so much else, to catch in his magic mirror the principal types of the civilization of his times, and by a divine gift to fix them in his pages, ineffaceable for ever. The men and women who in stately procession troop through the plays of Shakespeare, whether they masquerade in Homeric chlaina and peplos, in Roman toga and stola, in medieval mail and wimple, are all of his own age, for he knew no other. Heine, as we saw in a former page, reckons it a piece of right good fortune that Shakespeare came just when he did, before the Puritans had "rooted up, flower by flower, the religion of the past;" while "the popular belief of the Middle Ages—Catholicism—destroyed in theory, yet existed in all its enchantment, in the spirit of humanity, and upheld itself in the manners, fashions, and intuitions of men." His plays give us a picture of society, with its medieval order still subsisting, and illuminated by the last rays of the setting sun of chivalry. They are, in Heine's admirable phrase, "a proof that merry England once really existed," blooming with light and colour and joy, which have long passed away. The work of portraiture which Shakespeare did for sixteenth-century England accidentally and by the way, Honoré

de Balzac set himself deliberately to do for nineteenth-century France, as it existed under the Empire, the Restoration, and the Monarchy of July. There is as great a difference between the spirit in which the two artists worked, as in the effect which they produce upon us. In one we have the unconscious power which is a token of the richest exuberance of health; in the other, the restless striving and panting endeavour which speak of a fevered brain and a diseased heart. In Shakespeare there is a pervading freshness, as of mountain air—a perfume, as of "sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses." In Balzac we breathe an atmosphere which may be likened to that "Egyptian gale" issuing from the Bath ball-room, whose pestilential vapours, so nearly fatal to Mr. Matthew Bramble, have received all too minute description and analysis from the learned pen of Tobias Smollett.

It would seem to be "evident to any formal capacity," that in judging of an author's works, the purpose which he avows in writing them ought not to be overlooked. The purpose assigned may not, indeed, be the true, the chief, or the sole purpose intended, and most certainly will not have been the only purpose served. Our words once uttered, still more, once printed, are no longer ours. Books have an existence and a career of their own, quite independent of the writer's volition. Still, no criticism can be fair, or really scientific, which neglects the account an author himself gives of his end and aim. Thus, if we would judge rightly of the *Waverley Novels*, it is important to remember that their author,

in dedicating them to George IV., intimates their function as being to "amuse hours of relaxation, or relieve those of languor, pain, and anxiety," and deems that "the success they are supposed to have achieved" in these respects "must have so far aided the warmest wish of his Majesty's heart, by contributing, in however small a degree, to the happiness of his people." Théophile Gautier, less modestly, in his preface to a book[1] where, indeed, modesty has no place, declares the use of a novel to be twofold—namely, to put certain thousands of francs into the pocket of the author, and to supply more amusing reading than is offered by the organs of utilitarianism, virtue, and progress in the journalistic press. No doubt Honoré de Balzac, a professed man of letters, felt the force of Dr. Johnson's dictum, "For we that live to please, must please to live." But he did not regard his pen as a mere instrument for making money; nor was it his aim to titillate the popular taste, or to pander to the prurient instincts of mankind. "One day," he writes, "people will know that no two centimes have found their way into my purse which have not been hardly and laboriously gained; that praise and blame have been quite indifferent to me; that I have constructed my work in the midst of cries of hate and discharges of literary musketry; and that I proceeded in it with a firm hand and an unswerving purpose."[2] When, indeed, Balzac said that

[1] *Mademoiselle de Maupin.*

[2] *Letter to Madame Hanska; Œuvres*, vol. xxiv. p. 381. Madame Surville tells us, "L'amour qu'il avait pour la perfection et son profond respect pour son talent et pour le public lui firent peut-être trop travailler

praise or blame were quite indifferent to him, he must not be taken quite literally; no man ever more keenly hungered after fame; but it is absolutely true that he kept his purpose steadily before him, never suffering himself to be turned aside from it *arbitrio popularis auræ;* and that he was content to leave his literary reputation to Time, the great judge.[1] "Construire son œuvre" was his abiding thought, and, as I have said, that work was to paint the civilization of his age.

This was the great idea of his literary life. At first, as he tells us in the Introduction to his *Comédie Humaine*, the project floated before his mind like a dream, vague, unsubstantial, illusory—"a chimera smiling on him, just showing a glimpse of its woman's face, and then spreading its wings, and taking its flight back to its fantastic heaven." But in time the vision took shape, proportion, substance. To embody a great image of the age in which he lived, of its men, its women, and its things, that is, of its persons and of

ce style. . . . Ce n'était qu' après avoir corrigé successivement onze ou douze épreuves d'une même feuille qu'il donnait le *bon à tirer*, tant attendu par les pauvres typographes tellement fatigués de ces corrections, qu'ils ne pouvaient faire chacun qu'une page de suite de Balzac. Pendant qu'il demandait tant d'épreuves de la même feuille et que ses corrections diminuaient de beaucoup le prix de ces œuvres, on l'accusait de tirer à la page et de faire du mercantilisme!"—*Ibid.*, p. lxix.

[1] His sister tells us that he would console her in the following terms when she was distressed by attacks made upon him: "Êtes vous simples de vous attrister! les critiques peuvent-ils rendre mes œuvres bonnes ou mauvaises? laissons faire le temps, ce grand justicier; si ces gens se trompent, le public le verra un jour ou l'autre, et l'injustice profite alors à celui qu'elle a maltraité; d'ailleurs, ces *guerilleros* de l'art touchent juste quelquefois, et en corrigeant les fautes qu'ils signalent, on rend l'œuvre meilleure; en fin de compte, je leur dois de la reconnaissance."—*Œuvres*, vol. xxiv. p. lx.

the material representations in which their thoughts found expression, such was the dream which gradually developed into a project, and then was ever before him as a fixed idea. To make the inventory of vices and virtues, to bring together the chief phenomena of the passions, to choose the most salient facts of society, to paint character, to compose types by uniting homogeneous traits, and thus to write that side of the history of the times which professed historians so often overlook—this is the account that he gives of the task to which he set himself. Of the vastness of that task he was fully conscious. Of his power to execute it he never for a moment doubted. Human nature is infinitely varied. Chance is the greatest romancer in the world: "pour être fécond il n'y a qu'à l'étudier." Irrefragable patience and invincible courage would, indeed, be required. But with their aid he should achieve a monumental work upon nineteenth-century France; such a work as the world in vain desiderates upon the civilizations of ancient Athens, Rome, Tyre, Memphis, Persia, India, "le tableau de la société moulée sur le vif, avec tout son bien et tout son mal."[1] This is the character in which Balzac presents himself in the introduction to his great work; not as a mere teller of stories, but as the historian of a civilization. And it is thus that I propose now to consider him.

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. i.: *Avant-Propos*, p. 7.

(III)

The *Comédie Humaine* as we have it (for with Balzac's other writings I am not at present concerned) is incomplete. Out of the one hundred and fifty tales of which it was to have consisted, only eighty were written. Then in the maturity of his powers and the fulness of his success, with the "fair guerdon," so long hoped for, just gained, the "blind Fury with the abhorréd shears" made her inexorable apparition, cutting short the "thin spun life" with the too vast enterprise which hung upon it. But the fragment of his gigantic design which remains to us is colossal, filling, as it does, in the *édition définitive* of his works, seventeen royal octavo volumes, each containing some six hundred and fifty closely-printed pages. His novels, as he ultimately arranged them, are grouped under six divisions, "Scenes," as he terms them, of life's poor play. First come the *Scènes de la Vie Privée;* then the *Scènes de la Vie de Province, Parisienne,* and *Politique;* and, lastly, the *Scènes de la Vie Militaire,* and *de la Vie de Campagne.* The classification appears to be to some extent arbitrary. It is difficult to see why a story like *Modeste Mignon* should not appear among the Scenes of Provincial Life, or a story like *Une Fille d'Ève* in the Scenes of Parisian Life, as well as in the Scenes of Private Life, to which these two tales are assigned by the author. Balzac insists, however, that the groups correspond to certain general ideas. His Scenes of Private Life,

he tells us, represent infancy, youth, and their faults, as the Scenes of Provincial Life depict the age of passions, of calculation, of interest and ambition; while, again, the Scenes of Parisian Life offer a picture of the taste, the vices, and all the *choses effrenées* excited by the civilization peculiar to capitals, where the extremes of good and evil meet. Each of these divisions, he maintains, has its local colour; and local colour with Balzac means a great deal. Then, after painting social life thus under its three ordinary aspects, he passes on to the exceptional existences of political life; thence to Scenes of War, the most imperfect of all his divisions; and, lastly, to Scenes of Country Life, which he describes as being, in some sort, the evening of the "various day" through which he has travelled. Lastly, to serve as epilogue, he gives us his *Études Philosophiques*, where he is by way of exhibiting the causes of all the effects, of painting the ravages of thought, sentiment by sentiment. These are the frames, or rather galleries, to use his own expression, in which he proposed to set the multitude of existences born of his creative brain —the two or three thousand salient figures of an epoch which are, as he says, the sum of the types presented by every generation. Each of his novels is complete in itself. But many of the principal actors come upon the stage again and again in the different stories. As in the real world, we see them in the several periods of human life, in the varied hues of circumstance, in the different relations and multiform aspects of social existence. This incessant

reintroduction into his tales of the same characters, so severely censured by many of his earlier critics, was a necessary part of Balzac's plan. And it is a signal proof of his consummate genius that it was possible for him thus to give currency to the coinage of his brain. Not only are his characters so strongly cast that once seen they are never forgotten, but, by an illusion which might have seemed beyond the reach of art, the verisimilitude of his work is increased by their frequent reappearance. It is as natural to us to come constantly in his stories upon Rastignac and Canalis, Du Tillet and Nucingen, De Marsay and Montriveau, Madame de Beauséant and Madame d'Espard, the Duchesse de Langeais and the Duchesse de Carigliano, as it is to find the same princes, courtiers, and magistrates, great ladies of the court, *présidentes* and *bourgeoises*, wits, warriors, and financiers, reappearing volume after volume in St. Simon's immense *Mémoires*.

The best introduction to the *Comédie Humaine* is *Le Père Goriot*, because in it we meet, in the earliest stages of their career, many of the principal personages who reappear in the subsequent scenes. It is also one of the best examples of the author's powers, and is, perhaps, the most widely known of his compositions. *Le Père Goriot!* Who that has read this terrible story, which holds among Balzac's novels the same place as *King Lear* among Shakespeare's plays, has not felt himself, from the first, in the grasp of the great enchanter? You "cannot choose but hear" as he unfolds to you a tale far more weird and horrible

than that wherewith the Ancient Mariner held spell-bound the wedding-guest. It is worth while to translate the page with which he introduces it—

"Madame Vauquer, *née* de Conflans, is an old woman who for forty years has kept at Paris a *pension bourgeoise* in the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, between the Quartier Latin and the Faubourg Saint-Marcel. This boarding-house, known under the name of the Maison Vauquer, receives alike men and women, young and old, and never have slanderous tongues found occasion to attack the morals of so respectable an establishment. It is true that for thirty years no young person was ever seen there; and, indeed, for a young man to bring himself to live there, his family must make him a very slender allowance. In 1819, however, at about which period this drama opens—a poor young girl happened to be residing there. Discredited as is the word 'drama' by the perverted and tortuous way in which it has been lavished in these days of dolorous literature, I must needs make use of it here; not indeed that this history is in the true sense dramatic; but perhaps when it is ended, some tears may have been shed over it, *intra muros et extra*. Will it be understood outside Paris? One may doubt it. The peculiarities of this scene, full of detail and local colour, can hardly be appreciated, save between the *buttes* of Montmartre and the heights of Montrouge, in that illustrious valley of plaster ever ready to fall, and gutters black with mud; that valley full of real sufferings, of joys often false, and ever in so terrible a whirl of excitement, that only something quite abnormal can produce a more than momentary sensation. Still, one meets there, from time to time, with sorrows to which the agglomeration of virtues and vices lends grandeur and solemnity. At the view of them egoism and self-interest pause and are touched with pity; but the impression thus produced is evanescent, like the savour of a delicious fruit quickly eaten. The car of civilization, like that of Juggernaut, although there are hearts

less easily ground to powder than the rest, which for a moment retard it and clog its wheel, soon breaks them, and proceeds on its victorious course. Just so will you do: you whose white hand holds this book: you who plunge into the soft depths of your easy-chair, saying to yourself, 'This may amuse me, perhaps.' After having read the story of the secret misfortunes of Père Goriot, you will dine with an excellent appetite, attributing your insensibility to the author, taxing him with exaggeration, charging him with poetry. Ah! be assured this drama is no fiction, no romance. All is true: so true that each may recognize the elements of it in himself: in his own heart, perhaps."

This is, as it were, the overture. The curtain draws up and discloses the Maison Vauquer, "situated in the lower part of the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, at the spot where the ground sinks towards the Rue d'Arbalète by so sudden and stiff a descent that horses rarely go up and down it." "This circumstance," the novelist continues, "if favourable to the silence which reigns in the streets perched between the dome of the Val-de-Grâce and the dome of the Panthéon, two edifices which change the state of the atmosphere by the yellow tone they give it, casting everything into shade by the several tints thrown from their cupolas. The pavements are dry: there is neither water nor mud in the gutters: grass grows along the walls. Even the lightest-hearted passer-by becomes grave there. The noise of a carriage is an event: the houses are melancholy, the walls prison-like. A stray Parisian would see there only middle-class boarding-houses or institutions, abodes of poverty or *ennui*, of moribund age or joyous youth enforced to

toil. No quarter of Paris is more horrible, nor, let us add, less known. The Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, above all, is like a frame of bronze, the only one congruous with this narrative, for which no colours are too sombre, no ideas too sad, to attune the mind, as when the light of day grows less and less, and the song of the guide dies away, what time the traveller descends to visit the catacombs. Apt comparison! Who shall decide which is the more horrible spectacle —withered hearts or empty skulls!"

The Maison Vauquer is the catacomb to which Balzac guides his readers in *Le Père Goriot:* and he proceeds to lavish upon it his usual wealth of description, until the ignoble boarding-house stands before our eyes in its squalid completeness as vividly as it stood before his. Stroke after stroke paints for us its exterior, and then he brings us to the glass door armed with the shrill alarm-bell. We peep through before we enter, and see the arcade painted in green on the wall, and the statue of Cupid with all the varnish peeling off. Then we go in and make our way to the *salon.* We survey its well-worn horsehair chairs, its empty grate, and chimney-piece adorned with ancient artificial flowers and vulgar clock in bluish marble, its barred windows, and walls hung with paper representing scenes from *Telemachus,* with the classical personages coloured, and meanwhile our nostrils are saluted with that "odeur de pension," for which human speech has no one epithet: "elle sent le renfermé, le moisi, le rance; elle donne froid; elle est humide au nez; elle penètre les vêtements; elle a le goût d'un

salle où l'on a dîné; elle pue le service, l'office, l'hospice." Still this room is elegant and perfumed, as a boudoir should be, compared with the *salle à manger*, where we are introduced to Madame Vauquer and her *pensionnaires*—Madame Vauquer with her cat, her face fresh as a first autumn frost, her nose like a parrot's beak, her wrinkled eyes, her fat dimpled hands, her expression varying from the grimace peculiar to ballet-dancers to the sour scowl of the usurer, her little tulle cap with a band of false hair all awry, her slippers down at heels, whose whole person explains the boarding-house, just as the boarding-house implies her person. Her *pensionnaires* are seven in number. Poor Victorine Taillefer, motherless, and disowned by her wealthy father, with her kind guardian, Madame Couture, who takes her to Mass every Sunday and to confession every fortnight, so as, at all events, to make a good girl of her. M. Poiret, who seems to have been one of the donkeys of our great social mill, some pivot upon which had turned public misfortunes or scandals; one of those men of whom, as we see them, we say, "And yet such people must be!" Mademoiselle Michonneau, with her chilling white aspect, her stunted, menacing form, her shrill, grasshopper-like voice: Vautrin, the man of forty, with dyed whiskers, large shoulders, ample chest, great muscular development and deep bass voice, whose features, streaked with premature wrinkles, are significant of a hardness out of keeping with his supple and engaging manners; always gay and obliging, but somehow inspiring every one with

dread, his eye seeming to go to the bottom of all questions, all consciences, all feeling; knowing all about everything—ships, the sea, France, foreign parts, business, men, events, the law, the hotels, the prisons; ever ready, if a lock happened to be out of order, to put it right with the remark, "Ça me connaît!" He is really an escaped convict in disguise, known at the galleys as "Trompe-la-Mort," and is one of the most powerful and terrible of Balzac's creations. Then we have Eugène de Rastignac, with his Southern face, his fair complexion, black hair and blue eyes, his manner and air speaking of gentle birth; the pure and sacred affections of his home life still strong in his heart, as yet uncorrupted. He is reading for the bar, and living meanwhile upon the twelve hundred francs a year which his family, as poor as noble, contrives with the greatest difficulty to send him. Then, lastly, there is Père Goriot, who had come to the *pension* in 1813 with jewellery and plate and a well-furnished wardrobe; taking the best *apartement* in the house, and paying his hundred francs a month for it with the air of a man to whom a few louis more or less were matter of indifference; his hair daily powdered by the hairdresser of the neighbourhood, and indulging in the best snuff regardless of expense. He was *M. Goriot* in those days, and a person of consideration. But gradually his jewellery and plate disappear; his fine raiment wears out, and is not replaced; he moves from the first floor to the second, and then after a time to a garret on the third. His hair is no longer powdered, and his snuff-box is no

longer used. The light of prosperity dies away from his face; it grows sadder every day; it is the most desolate of all that are seen round that wretched table. His *pension* sinks to forty-five francs a month, and his consideration sinks in proportion. He is now known familiarly as *Père Goriot*, and is regarded as an excellent subject for the wit of the other boarders—"une pauvre créature rebuteé, un souffre-douleur sur qui pleuvaient les plaisanteries." Handsome women have been observed to visit him now and again, and he is generally supposed to have ruined himself by clandestine vices. These are the inmates of Madame Vauquer's *pension*, but there are certain *pensionnaires externes* who for the most part subscribe only to the dinner, which costs thirty francs a month. The most notable among them is Horace Bianchon, a student at the hospital, and one day to be a great light of medical science. He is a special friend of Rastignac and a very favourite character of Balzac's.

It is the hour of *déjeûner* at the Pension Vauquer. The boarders are assembling in the fetid *salle à manger*, and young Rastignac comes in from his law class, full of a ball to which he had been on the previous night, at the house of a very great lady, Madame de Beauséant, to whom he is related. He had met there a lovely Countess, a perfectly divine creature, of whom he gives a glowing description, and —will they believe it?—he is quite sure he has seen her that very morning alone and on foot in the by no means fashionable neighbourhood of the Rue des Grès. "No doubt she was going to pay a visit to

Gobseck the money-lender," Vautrin suggests; and then he adds, making a shrewd guess upon the strength of a bit of information he had surreptitiously picked up, "Your Countess is called Anastasie de Restaud, and lives in the Rue du Helder. Rummage in the hearts of the women of Paris, and you will find the usurer there in the first place, the lover only in the second." Rastignac is astonished, and, strange to say, Père Goriot looks uneasy. "Ah, yes," Vautrin further remarks, "yesterday at the top of the wheel at the Duchess's; to-day at the bottom of the ladder at the discounter's. *Voilà les Parisiennes.* If their husbands can't supply means for their *luxe effrenée*, they sell themselves; if they can't do that, they would disembowel their own mothers to find wherewithal to make a show. *Connu, Connu!*" In the course of the day Rastignac goes to call upon Madame de Restaud, whom he finds with her husband and M. Maxime de Trailles (for in this *ménage* there is a *mariage à trois*), and is well received, upon the strength of his relationship to Madame de Beauséant, until he happens to pronounce the name of Père Goriot, whom he had noticed leaving the house by the back stairs as he was entering it. The effect is like that which is fabled to have been produced by the Gorgon's head. Shortly afterwards Eugène de Rastignac takes his leave, very much astonished and very much out of conceit with himself, and pays a visit to his cousin, Madame de Beauséant, who is herself in trouble. For three years there has existed between her and the Marquis d'Ajuda-Pinto what

Balzac calls "une de ces liaisons innocentes qui ont tant d'attraits pour les personnes ainsi liées qu'elles ne peuvent supporter personne en tiers," and now M. d'Ajuda-Pinto is about to be married. All Paris, except Madame de Beauséant, knows that the banns are to be published next day, and while Rastignac is there the Duchesse de Langeais calls and enlightens her dear Clara's ignorance in the true spirit of the candid friend. The young man listens to a page of biting epigrams hidden under the affectionate phrases of the two women, and receives the first lesson of his Parisian education. Then he tells them of his own misadventure at Madame de Restaud's, and learns from Madame de Beauséant that the lovely Countess is Père Goriot's daughter. There is another daughter, Delphine, married to the Baron de Nucingen, a rich Alsacian financier; the father is passionately devoted to both, and both are ashamed of him, and have denied him.

"Deny their own father!" Eugène exclaims in horror.

"Yes," Madame de Beauséant explains; "their own father, and a good father too, who has given each of them five or six hundred thousand francs to make them happy and to marry them well, keeping for himself an income of some eight or ten thousand crowns, for he supposed that his daughters would always be his daughters, that he would have two homes, where he would be adored and taken care of. In two years his sons-in-law banished him from their society as though he were the lowest of wretches."

And then the Duchess takes up the tale. This old vermicelli-maker—Foriot, Moriot, or whatever his name is—had been president of his section during the Revolution, and had laid the foundation of his fortune, after the manner of the patriots of that period, by selling flour at ten times its cost price. His one passion was love of his daughters, whom he adored, and for whom he made great marriages. Under the Empire his sons-in-law tolerated him. But when the Restoration came, how could "this old '93" be endured in the *salon* of the noble or the banker? The old man discerned that his daughters were ashamed of him, and he sacrificed himself for them. He banished himself from their homes, and when he saw them content, he knew that he had done well. He had given them everything; for twenty years he had lavished his love upon them; in one day he had surrendered to them his fortune. The lemon well squeezed, they had thrown the rind into the streets. "We see it every day," the Duchess continues, "and in every relation of life," glancing at her friend. "Notre cœur est un trèsor; videz-le d'un coup, vous êtes ruinés." "It is an infamous world!" Madame de Beauséant exclaims. "Infamous! no," the Duchess replies. "It goes its own way, that is all. The world is a slough; let us try to remain above it."

The Duchess takes her leave, and Madame de Beauséant, who is in the humour for moralizing, discourses to Eugène upon Parisian society, its corruption, its vanity, and its pitilessness. The more

coldly you calculate, the greater will be your success. You are either an executioner or a victim. Such is, in substance, her parable. A little later M. Vautrin unfolds to the student his philosophy of life, which does not materially differ from that of the great ladies. He agrees that Paris is a slough, and a very curious slough, where those who get splashed in a carriage are respectable people (one thinks of Carlyle's "gigmen"), and those who get splashed on foot are rascals. "Have the misfortune to take some trifle off a hook, and you are set on high in the dock as a curiosity. Steal a million, and you are pointed out in *salons* as a virtue. And you pay thirty millions of francs a year to police and magistrates to keep up that morality. Charming!" That virtue and vice are mere names, is the cardinal point in the simple system of this sage of the galleys. "Do you know," he asks Rastignac, "how you make your way here in Paris? By the dazzle of genius, or the address of corruption. Mere honesty is of no use whatever." And he adds, parenthetically, "I don't speak to you of those poor helots who, all the world over, work away without getting any recompense for their toil. I call them God Almighty's ragamuffins. There you have virtue in the full bloom of its idiocy: yes, and beggary with it. I can see from here the face those fellows will make if God should play us the bad joke of staying away from the Last Judgment." The actions which lead to the hulks, he maintains, are of precisely the same nature as those which lead to the most sublime heights of political or military life. His

last counsel is, "Don't be more tenacious of your opinions than of your word. When there is a demand for them—sell them. A man who boasts of never changing his opinions is like a man who should undertake always to go in a straight line—a simpleton who believes in infallibility. There are no such things as principles; there are only events: there are no such things as laws; there are only circumstances. A wise man embraces events and circumstances to shape them to his own ends. If there were such things as principles and fixed laws, would nations put them on and off as we change a shirt? A man is not called upon to be wiser than a whole people. The man who has rendered the least service to France is a fetish, highly honoured because he has always seen things in red: the utmost he is good for is to be put in the Conservatoire among the machines, labelled La Fayette: while the Prince, whom every one throws a stone at, and who despises humanity enough to spit in its face (*pour lui cracher au visage*) as many oaths as it asks for, has prevented the partition of France at the Congress of Vienna: he has deserved crowns: people throw mud at him." Such are some of the pleadings of M. Vautrin; and the cynicism of the world, as he makes acquaintance with it, teaches the young man the same lesson which had revolted him when it came from the coarse lips of the disguised convict. The novelist traces with supreme skill how, by a sort of fatality, the least events of Rastignac's life combined to urge him to the career "where, as on the field of battle, he must slay or be

slain, deceive or be deceived; at the barrier of which he must lay down his conscience, his heart, put on a mask, use men pitilessly as pieces of the game, and, as at Lacedæmon, seize fortune unobserved to merit the crown." The contrast between the splendour of the great world into which he has found his way through his cousin Madame de Beauséant, and the squalor of the Maison Vauquer, overpowers him. His imagination inspires his heart with a thousand bad thoughts. He sees life as it is: law and morality impotent among the rich, and wealth the "ultima ratio mundi." "Vautrin is right," he says to himself; "fortune is virtue." Vautrin, indeed, has taken rather a fancy to him, and is willing to serve him more effectually than by mere precept. Poor Victorine Taillefer's modest eyes have revealed to that terrible observer the tender interest with which the handsome young man has inspired her. Why should they not make a match of it? He charges himself with her fortune, a modest percentage on which Rastignac will hardly grudge him. And so, assuming the *rôle* of Providence, he arranges a duel in which Victorine's only brother is killed by a military bravo, whereupon she becomes the heiress to the millions of her father, who hastens to reconcile himself to her. Rastignac shrinks back with horror from the alliance so considerably planned, and just at that moment Vautrin is arrested as an escaped convict, through the agency of Mademoiselle Michonneau, and returns to the galleys for a season.

Meanwhile Rastignac has met in society Delphine,

Baronne de Nucingen, Père Goriot's second daughter, a young and beautiful woman married to a great capitalist whom she loathes, not without good reason, and just deserted by De Marsay, the king of dandies and a leading politician in the *Comédie Humaine*. The intimacy between Delphine and Rastignac soon becomes of the closest kind, to the enthusiastic delight of Père Goriot, who likes Eugène, and wishes "Fifine" to be happy in her own way. Illimitable love for his daughters has swallowed up all sentiments of morality and religion in the "old '93," or, rather, supplies their place, for he seems never to have had any, and he devotes almost all that remains of his pecuniary resources to furnishing a suite of rooms for his daughter's lover! In the mean time Madame de Restaud has been ruined by Maxime de Trailles. An inveterate gambler, he has given bills for a hundred thousand francs, which he has been unable to meet, and to extricate him from the hands of his creditors, Anastasie has sold the family diamonds to Gobseck. Naturally, her husband has discovered the transaction. At the same time, Delphine is at variance with the Baron de Nucingen about her fortune. These troubles of his daughters are the last drop of bitterness in the old man's cup, and he is struck down by serous apoplexy. There is to be a great ball next day at Madame de Beauséant's, to which, through Eugène's influence with his cousin, Delphine has been invited, to her unspeakable delight. Hitherto the Faubourg St. Germain has been closed to her, though her sister is received there, and she has been devoured by jealousy. "She

would lick up all the mud between the Rue St. Lazare and the Rue de Grenelle to enter my drawing-room," Madame de Beauséant had said to Rastignac. "If you present her to me, you will be her Benjamin; she will adore you." Madame de Restaud is to appear at the ball, and in order to silence the tongues of the world, if possible, is to wear—for the last time—the famous diamonds which her husband has ransomed from Gobseck; but her *couturière*, who has got wind of Anastasie's troubles, declines to send home a certain *robe lamée* until a thousand francs are paid for it. The Countess is in despair. She goes to her father, and the old man drags himself from his sick-bed and crawls off to Gobseck to raise the money. Rastignac comes in and finds him exhausted by the effort. "I have sold six hundred francs' worth of forks and spoons and buckles," he explains: "then I made over my annuity for one year to old Gobseck for four hundred francs, paid down. Bah! I can live on dry bread: that was good enough for me in my youth, and may serve the turn again. Anyhow, my Nasie will have a fine time to-morrow night. She will be smart. I've got the thousand-franc note there under my pillow. It warms me up to have there, under my head, what will give pleasure to poor Nasie." In the evening of the next day the old man is evidently sinking. Eugène leaves him to the care of Bianchon, and goes to Delphine, whom he finds "coiffée, chausée, n'ayant plus que sa robe de bal à mettre." She is astonished that he is not in evening dress. He is astonished that she thinks of going to

the ball. But she will not listen to him, and sends him off in her carriage to make his toilette as soon as possible, and come back to take her to Madame de Beauséant's. He went off to dress, the narrative continues, making the saddest, the most discouraging reflections. The world seemed to him an ocean of mud, in which a man sank up to his neck if he once set foot in it. He had seen the three great expressions of Society: Obedience, Struggle, and Revolt; the Family, the World, and Vautrin. And he dared not take his part. Obedience was tiresome: Revolt impossible: Struggle doubtful. The education which he is receiving is already bearing its fruits. Already his love is tinged with egotism. His tact enables him to see into Delphine's heart. He feels she is capable of going to the ball over her father's body. And he has neither the strength to reason with her, nor the courage to displease her, nor the virtue to quit her. As he drives to the Hôtel de Beauséant with this beautiful and elegant woman, he is silent and moody. Delphine asks him what ails him. He replies, "The death-rattle of your father is in my ears," and he recounts with the warm eloquence of youth "the ferocious action" to which Madame de Restaud's vanity had urged her, and the crisis which Père Goriot's last act of devotion had brought on. Delphine's tears fall; but she quickly dries them. "Je vais être laide, pensa-t-elle."

While his daughters are dancing, Père Goriot lies dying. I do not know anything in literature more full of horror than the account of that death.

Bianchon watches by him through the night. The one thought in his wandering mind is of his daughters. He calls them by their names. He says a thousand times, "Elles dansent! Elle a sa robe." "Il me faisait pleurer, le diable m'emporte!" Bianchon confesses to Rastignac, who comes in when the next day is well advanced, his mind full of the splendour of the *fête* of the previous night. He sits down at the foot of the dying man's pallet in that squalid garret, and listens to his wandering talk. For Père Goriot to die is never again to see his daughters. That for him is hell. But he has served an apprenticeship to it since their marriage! And then he goes back to the old days in the Rue de la Jusienne, when they were children—"quand elles ne raisonnaient pas." Ah, why could they not always remain little! He has given them all he had, and they leave him to die alone. Had he kept his money, they would be there: they and their husbands and their children—tears in their eyes and kisses on his cheek. Money gives everything: even daughters. And then he recalls the early days of their married life, when there was always a place for him at their tables, and he was a welcome guest, and their husbands treated him with consideration, for he still had the air of a man who possessed something. Ah, how well he remembers the first time when a look of Anastasie's told him that he had uttered some *bêtise* which humiliated her! The pain of dying is as nothing to the pain which that look gave him. And Delphine, too! Even Delphine grew to be ashamed of him. Since the day

that their eyes ceased to shine upon him, it has been all winter for him. Annoyance, humiliation, insult—he has swallowed all! "Venez, venez, mes chéries, venez encore me baiser, un dernier baiser, le viatique de votre père, qui priéra Dieu pour vous, qui lui dira que vous avez été de bonnes filles, qui plaidera pour vous!" They come not. Anastasie is in the midst of a terrible dispute with her husband; Delphine has taken cold at the ball, and is afraid of a "fluxion de poitrine." Bianchon and Rastignac lift the old man up to adjust him in his miserable bed. His eyes no longer see; but their hot tears dropping on his face wake up a gleam of consciousness in him. He thinks they are his daughters. "Nasie, Fifine," he cries, and seizes convulsively the young men's hair. "Ah, mes anges!" he murmurs; and, with these words, he passes away. "Sentiment suprême que le plus horrible, le plus involontaire des mensonges exaltait une dernière fois!"

Père Goriot has a pauper's funeral. Bianchon buys his coffin at the hospital. It is purchased there at a cheaper rate. Eugène places on his breast a medallion which the old man always wore next his heart. It contains locks of his daughters' hair when they were children, innocent and pure, "et ne raisonnaient pas," as he said in his agony. A priest, a choir-boy, and a beadle attend to the devotional part of the interment, a service of twenty minutes —a psalm, the *Libera*, the *De Profundis*—"as much as could be had for seventy francs in times when religion is not rich enough to pray gratis." Two

empty carriages, with due blazonings, represent the old man's sons-in-law, who have left the two young men to pay expenses. The day is falling. A damp, depressing twilight is setting in. Rastignac looks at the grave which the gravediggers are filling up, and drops into it the last pure tear of youth. From the high ground of the cemetery he surveys Paris, where the evening lights are just beginning to shine. His eyes rest almost greedily between the column of the Place Vendôme and the dome of the Invalides, where lives the *beau monde* which he had wished to enter. He says grandiosely, "À nous deux maintenant!" And by way of opening his campaign against Society, he goes to dine with Madame de Nucingen.

(IV)

Le Père Goriot is a good specimen of Balzac's best work. Nowhere is his observation keener, his colouring bolder, his diagnosis more divinatory. Nowhere do we find in more ample measure what Sainte-Beuve happily calls "cette efflorescence de la vie par laquelle il donne à tout le sentiment de la vie et fait frissonner la page même." And, as Taine justly observes, while each character is marked by the strongest individuality, and removed as far as possible from the general conceptions, the pure abstractions which metaphysical novelists muffle up with the names and conditions of men, who does not discern through the details which constitute personality and

make up life, an abridgment of one great side of the history of the age—nay, of the perennial history of the human heart? The story leaves Rastignac at the threshold of his career. He plays a great part in the *Comédie Humaine*, and at last rises to be Minister and Peer of France. There is a passage in the *Peau de Chagrin*, in which he unfolds for the benefit of a friend the lessons taught him by his experience. What fools call intrigue and moralists dissipation—well, he has found that it pays. Fit for everything and good for nothing, as lazy as a lobster, he attains all his ends. The world takes a man at his own valuation. Push yourself enough, and it makes room for you. Puff yourself enough, and it believes in you. Dissipation is a political system. Reckless extravagance (*manger sa fortune*) is a speculation, an investment of capital in funds, pleasures, protectors, acquaintances. The merchant risks a million, toils for twenty years, and ends, very likely, in bankruptcy without a shilling or a friend. The man of the world who knows its secret springs turns them to his own profit, and meanwhile—lives. Should he lose his money, he has friends, reputation, yes, and money too, to fall back on. Such is the real morality of the age as Rastignac has learnt it. Probity in men! The De Marsays and Nucingens, the De Trailles and Du Tillets, have taught him at what to rate it. Modesty in women! Delphine and Anastasie, nay, the Duchesse de Langeais and the Vicomtesse de Beauséant being judges, is it not a virtue fastened on with pins? These are among the most notable types of Parisian society in Balzac's

pages. The Duchess is the chief figure in a novel which bears her name. Madame de Beauséant is the wretched heroine of *La Femme Abandonnée*. Madame de Restaud, sadly changed since Eugène first saw her in the brilliancy of her beauty and guilty happiness, plays the principal part in the exceedingly powerful tale called *Gobseck*, where we behold the usurer at his trade. De Marsay, Du Tillet, De Trailles, and Nucingen with his marvellous *patois*, are familiar figures in the *Scènes de la Vie Parisienne*, where a whole story, *La Maison Nucingen*, is devoted to an exposition of the devices by which the Alsatian capitalist preys upon society.

But Balzac aspired to paint the life of the great capital in all its aspects.[1] The *demi-monde* is depicted by him no less fully and vividly than the *beau monde*. The Parisian courtesan, with her furious thirst for every species of swift gratification, her mania for destruction, her absolute blindness to the morrow, her concentration of her existence in the passing hour, lives for us in the person of Coralie, of Florine, of Esther. Not less vivid is his picture of the *bourgeoisie;* and it is to two characters drawn from this class, M. and Madame Marneffe, that we must go for the most terrible types of cynical corruption: they are peerless in their infamy.

> "Unutterable, abominable, and worse
> Than fables yet have feigned;"

the putrescent atmosphere in which they exist seems

[1] "J'aurai peint le grand monstre moderne sous toutes ses faces."—*Œuvres*, vol. xxiv. p. 382.

to hang about one's clothes and one's hair, nay, to penetrate to one's bones. One's impulse after reading of them is (in Carlyle's phrase) to bathe one's self in running water, put on change of raiment, and be unclean until the even. Balzac's picture of Parisian journalism is a fitting complement to his pictures of Parisian lust. In the one, as he says,[1] we have the corruption of the flesh; in the other the corruption of the intellect. "Obscene, disgusting, brutal, cut-throat," were the epithets applied by Charles Dickens to the newspapers of the United States in 1843. Fifty dollars, as he judged, would at any time convert malicious misrepresentation into sickening praise. Balzac, writing of the French press in the same year, expresses himself in very similar terms. But the description which Étienne Lousteau, himself a journalist, gives of "la vie littéraire" to young Lucien de Rubempré, of whom we shall see more presently, is, on several accounts, worth quoting. Slightly abbreviated, it is as follows:—

"'Outside the world of letters . . . there is not one single person in existence who is acquainted with the horrible Odyssey by which is reached what we must call—according to the diverse kinds of talent—popularity, fashion, reputation, fame, celebrity, public favour, those different rungs of the ladder which lead to glory, and are never a substitute for it. This fame, object of such ardent desire, is almost always a prostitute, crowned. Yes; for the lowest departments of literature, she is like the poor girl who shivers at the corners of the streets; for the literature of the second class she is the kept mistress who comes from ill-famed purlieus of journalism,

[1] See his letter to Madame Hanska: *Œuvres*, vol. xxiv. p. 380.

and to whom I serve as a useful friend; for the happy literature of success she is the courtesan, insolent and brilliant, who has her own luxuriously furnished apartment, pays taxes, is at home to fine gentlemen, treats and evil entreats them, has her liveries, her carriage, and can keep her hungry creditors waiting. Ah! those to whom she is, as she was once to me, and now is to you, a white-robed angel, with many-coloured wings, a green palm in one hand, in the other a flaming sword, with something in her at once of the mythological abstraction which lives at the bottom of a well, and of the poor virtuous girl in the banishment of a suburb, whose only riches are gained in the clear light of virtue by the efforts of a noble courage, and who soars back to heaven with a spotless character—when she does not die stained, polluted, violated, and forgotten, with a pauper's funeral;—these men, with brain circled in bronze, and with hearts still warm under the snows of experience—they are rare in the place which you see at your feet,' said he, as he pointed to the great city, from which the smoke was rising at the decline of day. 'They are few and sparse among this fermenting mass, rare as true love in the world of passion, rare as honestly gained fortunes in the world of finance, rare as in journalism a man unstained. The experience of the first man who told me what I now tell you was thrown away, and mine will doubtless prove useless to you. Ever, year by year, does the same impulse drive hither from the provinces an equal, not to say increasing, number of beardless ambitions, which, with proudly raised head and haughty courage, rush onwards to the assault of Success—that Princess Tourandocte, so to speak, of the *Arabian Nights*, whose Prince Calaf each of them intends to be. But not one of them guesses the riddle. All fall into the ditch of misfortune, into the mud of the newspaper, into the swamps of bookmaking. They pick up, wretched beggars, materials for biographical notices, made-up paragraphs, penny-a-lining news in the journals, or books ordered by logically-minded dealers in inked paper, who prefer a *bêtise* which can be had in a fortnight to a masterpiece which takes time

before it is ready for sale. These caterpillars, crushed before they become butterflies, live on shame and infamy, equally ready to bite or to puff a rising talent, at the command of a Pasha of the *Constitutionnel*, the *Quotidienne*, or the *Débats*, at a signal given by publishers, at the request of a jealous comrade, nay, often even for a dinner. Those who surmount these obstacles forget their ignoble beginnings. I, who now talk to you, for six months wrote articles, into which I put the flower of my intellect, for a wretch who said they were his, and who, on the strength of these specimens, got a place as *rédacteur* of a *feuilleton:* he did not take me into partnership, he did not even give me five francs, and yet I am obliged to give him my hand and to press his.'

"'And why?' said Lucien, proudly.

"'I may want to put ten lines in his *feuilleton*,' coldly replied Lousteau. 'In a word, my dear fellow, it is not work that is the secret of making a fortune in literature, but turning to account the work of others. The newspaper proprietors are the contractors—we are masons. Accordingly, the more pronounced a man's mediocrity, the more rapidly he gets on; he can swallow any amount of dirt, put up with anything, and flatter the little mean passions of literary sultans. . . . I pity you. In you I see what I once was, and I am sure that in one or two years you will be what I am now. You will believe that there is some secret jealousy, some personal interest, at the bottom of these bitter counsels; it is not so; they are dictated by the despair of the damned, who can never more leave his hell. No one dares put into words what I wail forth to you with the agony of a man struck to the heart, and crying like another Job upon his dunghill, "Behold my sores."'

"'Whether I strive in this arena or elsewhere, strive I must,' said Lucien.

"'Know then,' continued Lousteau, 'this struggle will be one with no breathing space if you have talent, for your best chance would be in having none. The austerity of your conscience, now pure, will give way before those in whose

hands you will see your success lie; who could give you life with a word, and who will not say that word; for, believe me, the successful writer is more insolent, more harsh to newcomers, than the most brutal publisher. Where the bookseller only sees a loss, the author dreads a rival; the former shows you to the door, the latter crushes you. To produce noble works, poor boy, you will dip your pen deep into the tenderness, the vital sap, the energy of your heart, and you will spread it all out in passions, in sentiments, in phrases! Yes, you will write instead of acting, you will sing instead of fighting, you will love, you will hate, you will live in your books; but when you have kept all your riches for your style, your gold and your purple for your characters, while you walk the streets of Paris in rags, happy in having sent out into the world a being named Adolphe, Corinne, Clarisse, René, or Manon, invested with all the attributes of real existence[1]—when you have ruined your own life and your digestion in giving life to this creation, you will see it calumniated, betrayed, sold, banished into the lagoons of oblivion by the journalists,—buried by your best friends. Can you look forward to the day when your creation will start up out of sleep, awakened—by whom? when? how? There is a magnificent book, the *pianto* of unbelief, *Obermann*, which roams in solitude about the desert of the shops, and which the booksellers therefore call in irony a nightingale;[2] when will its Easter come? No one knows.' . . .

"This rude outburst, uttered with the varying accents of the passions which it expressed, fell like an avalanche of snow into the heart of Lucien, and left there an icy cold. He remained standing, and silent for a moment. At last his heart, as though stimulated by the horrible poetry of difficulties,

[1] I do not profess to translate "en rivalisant avec l'état civil"—a phrase eminently characteristic of Balzac, and properly untranslatable: for what meaning would be conveyed by the words, "in rivalry with the registration of the State"?

[2] *Rossignol* is a slang term used in trade to signify a piece of stale goods.

broke out. He grasped the hand of Lousteau, and cried: 'I shall triumph!'

"'Good,' said the journalist; 'another Christian who goes down into the arena to give himself to the beasts.'"

Let us not pass away from Paris without noting the better aspects of its life, which the novelist has not ignored, but which, it must be owned, bring into stronger relief the dark portions of his picture: his sketch of true and tender conjugal love in Madame Jules; of commercial honesty in the shopkeeper César Birotteau; of inflexible integrity, both political and literary, in the republican D'Arthez; of high professional honour, and devotion to right and justice, in the notary Derville. Nor, again, let us forget that small band of religious persons in *L'Envers de l'Histoire Contemporaine*, whose self-sacrificing devotion, whose prayers and tears go up for a memorial to heaven from the midst of a society gangrened by corruptions parallel to those of the Cities of the Plain. It would be hard to find a more gracious example of fervent piety and charity divine than is exhibited by Madame de la Chanterie, and those holy and humble men of heart, M. Alain, M. Nicholas, M. Joseph, the Abbé de Vèze, who pursue, under her direction, their work and labour of love in self-chosen obscurity. Their daily text-book is *The Imitation of Christ;* and they live in the spirit of its precept, "Ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari." In their presence "the great Inquisitor of human nature" lays aside his functions. He is content to stand as it were with doffed hat and reverentially raise the curtain, to give us in these

"Frères de la Consolation" a glimpse of a better world—even in Paris.

(V)

Balzac has pointed it out as "one of the great wounds of our modern society," that nineteenth-century France is divided into two great zones—Paris and the provinces; the provinces jealous of Paris; Paris taking no thought of the provinces, save to demand money of them.[1] The tale, called *Illusions Perdues*, may be regarded as the bridge which, in the *Comédie Humaine*, connects the two zones. Its hero, Lucien de Rubempré, is a young man of Angoulême, whose real name is Chardon. His father, who had once been a surgeon-major in the Republican armies, had subsequently earned a living as a chemist, and had married the last survivor of the illustrious family of Rubempré, a girl of great beauty, whom he had miraculously saved from the scaffold in 1793. The chemist's premature death, upon the eve of a great discovery, had reduced his widow and two children to poverty. She makes her living as an *accoucheuse*. Her pretty daughter, Eve, gains fifteen sous a days by working for Madame Prieur, *blanchisseuse de fin*. All the money the two women can possibly save from their narrow earnings is devoted to Lucien, who inherits his father's talent

[1] *La Muse du Département: Œuvres*, vol. vi. p. 401. He adds, truly enough: "Autrefois Paris était la première ville de province, la cour primait la ville; maintenant Paris est toute la cour, la province est toute la ville."

and his mother's beauty, and is one of the most promising students in the College of Angoulême. He has formed there a close friendship with David Séchard, a noble type of "persistive constancy," of solid virtue, of inexhaustible tenderness, brought into strong relief by the sordid avarice of his father, the drunken old printer, who deceives and swindles his son, and nearly ruins his prospects in life. Both David and Lucien are in a true sense poets, but after a different kind. David's timid, melancholy, meditative nature finds its poetry in Eve, whose sweet blue eyes tell a true tale of candour, purity, and patience. His love is, as Balzac expresses it, *à l'allemande:* deep, long, unspoken because of its very profundity, and importing a life's devotion. "*Le nunc et semper et in secula seculorum* de la liturgie," the novelist finely observes, "est la devise de ces sublimes poëtes inconnus dont les œuvres consistent en de magnifiques épopées enfantées et perdues entre deux cœurs." Lucien's nature, cast in another mould, aspires ardently to fame. His poems find vocal expression, and attract the notice of Madame de Bargeton, a somewhat mature Delilah of literary tastes, who leads society in the noble quarter of Angoulême. Lucien's vanity is naturally flattered by the attentions of this great lady, who is quite willing to act as his Muse. She predicts a brilliant future for him; and by way of starting him in it, gives a grand evening party, where he is to read his verses. He repairs to it full of hope. All the notabilities of Angoulême are there: the Bishop and his Vicar-General; Madame de Chandon, a rival

queen of the provincial *beau monde*, and her husband, a "ci-devant jeune homme," "encore mince à quarante-cinq ans et dont la figure ressemblait à un crible;" M. de Saintot, President of the Society of Agriculture, a well of science—only empty—and his wife, a large, solemn, and extremely pious woman, but an unpleasant partner at cards, whose name of Élise is inappropriately diminished by her friends into Lili; M. de Barton, the amateur singer, and M. de Brébian, the amateur painter in sepia, with their wives, two ladies consumed by the desire to appear *Parisiennes*, whose toilettes offer an exposition of colour outrageously *bizarre;* M. le Comte de Senonches, a mighty hunter, and Madame de Senonches, with M. du Hautoy in attendance; the Baron de Rastignac—Eugène's father—and Madame la Baronne, with their two charming daughters; and others over whom I must not linger. The Prefect and the General are the last to arrive and close this gallery of provincial celebrities, of whom Balzac gives life-like portraits. Angoulême society does not share Madame de Bargeton's enthusiasm for budding bards, and is more astonished than delighted at the introduction of the young *roturier* into its august circle. The good Bishop, indeed, is an exception, and makes kind inquiries about the young man, which some of the more mischievous of the guests resolve to turn to their own purposes. M. de Rubempré, they tell the excellent Prelate, really displays a promising gift of poetry, and is much indebted to the help given him by his mother in his literary labour. The Bishop notes the fact with the benevolent

intention of saying something agreeable to Lucien, and, should occasion offer, of making some pleasant reference to his mother. The plotters, of course, take care that occasion shall offer. Lucien repeats some of his verses. Monseigneur compliments the young man upon them. "We cannot too highly honour," he observes, "those noble spirits into which God casts one of His rays. Yes," he continues, "poetry is a sacred thing; but, alas! poetry is suffering. Think of the silent nights of which those lines you admire are the fruit! Reverence and love the poet, almost always unfortunate in this life, but no doubt to be placed by God among His prophets in another. This young man is a poet," and he lays his hand upon Lucien's head. "Do you not see the fatal sign imprinted on his fine forehead?" Lucien is full of gratitude for this episcopal recognition, and goes on to speak, poet-like, of "the sublime travail to which we owe creations more authentic than those of actual existence," of the long gestation in the brain of the ideas which are to assume form and live among men. "Your *accouchement* must be laborious," cunningly observes M. du Hautoy, carrying on the figure. "Fortunately you have your excellent mother at hand to assist you," adds the Bishop, seeing his opportunity.

Thus does Lucien lose his first illusion. He walks away from Madame de Bargeton's heated *salon* with rage in his heart and the fires of his ambition burning only the more fiercely for his discomfiture; and, as he wends his way towards his miserable dwelling at

the east end of Angoulême, he sees David and Eve walking together on the bank of the Charente in the tranquil felicity of their young love; enjoying, as only happy youth can enjoy, the fresh yet warm air of the summer night, the perfume of the flowers, the splendour of the heavens; the poetry of Nature responding to the poetry of their own hearts, and interpreting it for them. Balzac is a master of the transitions, the artistic value of which he knew well. By-and-by Lucien goes to Paris, the true home of genius, as every one agrees, and there such of his illusions as had remained soon disappear. He learns that "il y a des impôts sur tout: on y vend tout: on y fabrique tout—même le succès." In time he meets Vautrin under a different aspect from that in which we saw the terrible figure of this "Cromwell of the galleys" in the Maison Vauquer; and the strange, eventful history of the two extends through another tale of considerable length and full of pictures of quite appalling vice, terminating congruously with the young man's suicide. I gladly turn aside from the contemplation of Lucien de Rubempré's career, to note the marvellous completeness with which, in the earlier portion of the *Illusions Perdues*, the conditions of life in Angoulême in the first quarter of this century are brought before us. This wealth of description, a special note of Balzac's work, is displayed in the greatest perfection in his Provincial Scenes. What can be happier, for example, than his picture of the Maison Claës, in its sombre, old-world dignity, or that of the Maison Rogron, in the colour

less cold of its *bourgeois* vulgarity? or his account of Tours in *Ursule Mirouet* or of Old Brittany in *Béatrix?* It is not enough for him to show us merely the men and women who are his typical creations as they act and speak in the various circumstances and periods of their lives. Far more than this is necessary for us to know them as he would have us know them. He would that we should be perfectly acquainted with all the surroundings in which they exist; the towns, the streets, the houses, the very furniture and garments in which they live and move and have their being; the viands they eat, the wines they drink, the books they read. He knew well that the "hidden man of the heart" leaves his impress upon every detail of exterior existence. He knew, too, that the accidents of life (as we speak) not only express us, but also to a great degree form us. Do they not go largely to make up life? They explain not only what a man is, but why he is what he is: "For such as we are made of, such we be." Hence the minuteness, the breadth, the completeness of the descriptive detail which Balzac deemed essential to his purpose, and in which he is absolutely unique. He called himself "a doctor in social sciences." He was, as Taine well expresses it, "an archæologist, an upholsterer, a tailor, a *marchande à la toilette*, a broker, a physiologist, and a notary, all in one. The immensity of his erudition almost equalled the immensity of his subject." It must be owned that occasionally his descriptions become absolutely oppressive in their thoroughness. One is ready to sink as the most

exact and elaborate account of it may be raiment or furniture fills page after page. There is justice in Sainte-Beuve's complaint, "il décrit trop." But it is true, too, as that critic adds, "Lorsqu'il plaçait dans un roman ces masses d'objets qui, chez d'autres eussent ressemblé à des inventaires, c'était avec couleur et vie; c'était avec amour. Les meubles qu'il décrit ont quelque chose d'animé; les tapisseries frémissent."

As the *Illusions Perdues* connect the two great zones into which Balzac finds French life divided, so in *Le Curé de Village* we pass from the provincial town to the country. The story opens at Limoges, in the shop of a dealer in old iron, "un nommé Sauviat," who in the troublous times of the Revolution had amassed a fortune, the demolished *châteaux* and convents having thrown upon the market an abundance of the materials in which he trafficked. The two sentiments strongest in the old tinker and his wife are a sense of religion and love of their daughter. They have hazarded their lives for the Catholic faith in the evil days of the Terror; they give their lives every day to little Veronica. It is a pretty picture which Balzac draws of "La Petite Vierge," as the neighbours call her, reading night after night to her father and mother the *Lives of the Saints*, the *Lettres édifiantes*, and other books which the priest lends her, old Mére Sauviat knitting the while, and calculating that she thus saves the price of the oil that burns in the lamp. Then comes the fatal day when *Paul et Virginie* first falls into the girl's hands, and awakens in her a whole world of

ideas and emotions which lend a new sweetness and a new language to the flowers; which show her fresh beauties in the heavens; and unspeakable depths of mystery in the gorgeous sunsets, in the pure splendour of the dew-bathed mornings, as she gazes on them from the banks of the Vienne. One of the little islands in the river becomes in her fantasy the *île de France* of Bernardin de St. Pierre's tale—the scene of an idyll which her imagination weaves for herself. Alas! it is to play a very different part in her tragic story. Round the figure of this young girl Balzac groups the life of Limoges. There is the banker, Graslin, whom she marries; there are the Bishop and his secretary, the Abbé Gabriel de Rastignac, Eugène's brother; Monseigneur's two Vicars-General, Dutheil and De Grancour; and excellent M. Grossetête and his wife, persons of consideration in the city. Then we have the miser Pinguet, upon whose mysterious murder the story hinges, and the Avocat-Géneral, the Vicomte de Granville, a conspicuous character in the *Comédie Humaine*, who devotes himself, with all the energy of a rising official, to the detection of the murderer. From Limoges the tale proceeds to the village of Montégnac, where we make acquaintance with the excellent parish priest, M. Bonnet. The Abbé Bonnet is an admirable study of what Balzac calls that "*mens divinior*, that apostolic tenderness which lifts the priest to a higher level than other men, and makes of him a divine being." Gabriel de Rastignac, whose curiosity is aroused by finding such a man in such a place, asks him why he

embraced the ecclesiastical state? "Je n'ai pas vu d'état dans la prêtrise," he begins his reply: "je ne comprend pas qu'on devienne prêtre par des raisons autres que les indéfinissables puissances de la vocation;" and then follows an account, unfortunately too long to be quoted here, of how it was that he became a priest. And again, when the Bishop's young secretary, upon whom the shadow of a mitre already rests, puts the question, "And do you really like being here?" he answers, "Yes: if God will, I shall die Curé of Montégnac. I could wish that my example had been followed by distinguished men who supposed that they were doing better by becoming philanthropists. Modern philanthropy is the curse of society. The principles of the Catholic religion alone can cure the maladies from which the body politic is suffering. Instead of describing the disease and spreading its ravages by elegiac laments, each should have put his hand to the work by entering as a simple labourer into the Master's vineyard. My task is far from complete. It is not enough to moralize people whom I found in a frightful state of impious sentiments. I wish to die in the midst of a generation entirely convinced."

"A frightful state of impious sentiments." In *Les Paysans* Balzac applied himself to the full portraiture of that state. His object, as we read in the dedication, was to tell the startling truth (*l'effrayante vérité*) about this class, the anti-social element created by the Revolution which—"a Robespierre with one head and twenty millions of arms"—will, as he judges,

one day swallow up the *bourgeoisie* as the *bourgoisie* has swallowed up the *noblesse*. In it he asks the legislator, not of to-day but of to-morrow, to accompany him to the fields, and to study the permanent conspiracy of those whom we still call weak against those who think themselves strong; of the cultivator against the capitalist. "Instead of fawning upon kings, as in former ages," he observes, "writers now fawn upon the masses. Crime has been made poetical; tears are drivelled over assassins; the *prolétariat* is well-nigh deified." "In the midst of this *vertige démocratique*," he asks, "is it not urgent to paint the peasant as he is? not the simple child of Nature presented in the idylls of those who have never contemplated him except through a Parisian opera-glass; not the virtuous and uncorrupted son of toil, fawned upon by demagogues who traffic in his passions and his blood;" but "cet infatigable sapeur, ce rongeur qui morcelle et divise le sol, le partage, et coupe un arpent de terre en cent morceaux, convié toujours à ce festin par une petite bourgeoisie qui fait de lui, tout à fois, son auxiliaire et sa proie." It was one of the author's last works. He was engaged upon it, he tells us, for eight years, during which he took it up and put it aside a hundred times. He judged it the most considerable of the volumes which he had resolved to write.

The plan of this story is simple enough. As is usually the case in Balzac's novels, there is hardly any plot in it. One of Napoleon's generals, the Comte de Montcornet, shortly after the Restoration, buys

a magnificent estate in Burgundy, and goes to reside upon it with his young wife. The story opens with an admirable account of this beautiful property, *Les Aigues* it is called, in the form of a letter to a friend in Paris from Émile Blondet, a journalist who frequently appears in the *Comédie Humaine*. He has gone to pay a visit to the Count and Countess just after they have entered upon the possession of their domain, and finds himself in a delightful spot where nature and art are united without the one spoiling the other; where art seems natural and nature is artistic. He expatiates upon the charms of the *château*, which he feels must have been built by a woman or for a woman: "un homme n'a pas d'idées si coquettes." And then there is the park, with its dark overhanging woods, full of beautiful walks by the running brooks. Nature with its stillness, its tranquil joys, its facile life, casts a spell upon him. "Oh voilà la vraie littérature," he exclaims; "il n'y a jamais de faute de style dans une priairie; le bonheur serait de tout oublier ici, même *les Débats*." Such is the place which the Comte de Montcornet has purchased, and where he goes to live with the full intention of discharging all a landlord's duties. The peasants, insatiable in their greed for land, are bent upon making his residence there impossible, in order that the estate may be broken up into small lots; and they attain their object by the most horrible brutality and the most monstrous chicane. In the background there is the vile figure of the usurer Rigou, an apostate Benedictine, married "in the year I. of the Republic"

to a maidservant of the Curé; he has for some years held the office of Mayor, and naturally poses as the champion of "the principles of '89," and the enemy of the Church. This *bourgeois* Heliogabalus exercises over his neighbourhood a more than feudal tyranny. The peasants, who are in his debt for money advanced to them to buy land beyond their means, are as serfs who unsuspectingly render to him veritable *corvées*. They are only too glad to cut and carry his wood, his hay, his grain, if thereby they may obtain from him time for payment of interest; nay, they patiently submit to his exercise of a *droit du seigneur* in consideration of *retardements de poursuites*. His household is made up of his wife, the *bonne* Annette, and Jean the gardener, and the business of these three persons is to minister to his desires; the least movement of his bushy eyebrows plunges them into mortal disquietude. Annette, "vrai chef d'œuvre de beauté fine, ingénieuse, piquante," is a handmaid in the patriarchal sense; the tenth of a succession of M. Rigou's Hagars. The meat and poultry, wines and liqueurs, vegetables and fruit, which supply his table are of exquisite quality. He has carried to perfection the science of egotism, of sensual gratification in all its forms. He is a Lucullus without display; a voluptuous skinflint. The peasantry are his tools. Unseen, he pulls the strings and they carry out his designs. The Comte de Montcornet's steward is murdered; and the Count himself has the narrowest escape from the same fate. He gives up the unequal contest. *Les Aigues* are sold, and the greater part of

the estate falls into Rigou's hands. The *château* is pulled down; the land parcelled out for *la petite culture*. Fourteen years afterwards Blondet travels by the place on his way to the *préfecture* to which he has been nominated, and finds it altered beyond recognition. The mysterious woods, the avenues of the park, have been cleared away; the country is like a tailor's paper patterns. The peasant has entered as conqueror into possession; the property is divided into more than a thousand lots; the population has tripled, and is lodged in lath-and-plaster dwellings which arise on all sides. "And this is progress!" exclaims Émile Blondet. In strong contrast to Rigou we have M. Benassis, the country doctor, who is the principal figure in another scene of country life, called after him *Le Médecin de Campagne*. Another and a better "Man of Ross," he is quoted by M. Alain in *L'Envers de l'Histoire Contemporaine*, as one of the true great men of the age. "He has left his name written on a *canton*. He has conducted a whole country from savagery to prosperity, from irreligion to Catholicism, from barbarism to civilization." The Frères de la Consolation set him before them as a standard and an encouragement, a monument and a lesson.

(VI)

So much must suffice by way of glance into the *Comédie Humaine*. Inadequate as must needs be any such view of a work which is in itself an epitome,

enough perhaps has been said to convey some faint conception, at all events of the outlines, of the picture which it presents. It is a sombre and terrible picture; what there is in it of goodness and truth, of religion and virtue, but serving to render more visible the surrounding darkness. Nor is it possible to mistake its general signification. It exhibits to us a society which has got rid of the ideas of man's free-will and moral responsibility, and has decided, in reversal of St. Augustine's dictum, that life is "voluptatis tempus non sanitatis:" a society which, putting aside religion as a fable too idle for investigation, and purity as a disease,—"a new malady brought into the world by Christ,"—works out the logic of the passions to its monstrous conclusion; a society believing, indeed, in the gratification of the senses while it lasts, and regretting it when it is gone, but with no other beliefs or regrets, and dominated (in Shelley's phrase) by "that principle of self of which money is the visible emanation." The question with which I am specially concerned here is whether this is a true picture. Does the *Comédie Humaine* possess the character which Balzac claimed for it? May the student of man and of society turn to it for the living image of manners in France during the first half of the nineteenth century? Is it an authentic document of the most important department of the history of our times? or is it a mere "tale of sound and fury, signifying nothing"?

In weighing the testimony of a witness, two points mainly have to be considered: Is he competent and is he honest? Balzac's competency would hardly seem

to be open to doubt. It is somewhere remarked by Lessing that the only historian really worthy of the name is he who grapples with the history of his own times; and he refers to the word ἵστωρ in support of this view. Balzac lived in the midst of the society which he essayed to paint. He applied himself diligently to the study of it under all its aspects. He set down nothing on hearsay. He spoke that he knew and testified that he had seen. Nor can there be any question as to his power of appreciating the phenomena which he discerned. His marvellous faculty of observation is indeed conceded on all hands. It may be said of him, in the fullest meaning of the words, that "he brought an eye for all he saw." He brought, too, imagination to idealize, and will to realize, what he saw. Then, as to his honesty: Is there reason for impugning it? Are there grounds for believing him to have distorted the facts which he professes to record? Certainly there is upon the face of his work no trace of passion or prejudice. His tone is everywhere calm and unperturbed. He leaves upon the mind the impression, not of a partisan, but of a *savant*. He regards with equal eye a Rigou and a Benassis. He exhibits the same care and conscientiousness whether he is delineating with supreme delicacy of touch an embodiment of wifely devotion in Madame Claës, or painting with his great bold strokes in Valérie Marneffe the most repulsive type of feminine corruption which human literature contains. Even in his worst characters he sees anything that there is of good, and faithfully sets it down.

The terrible Vautrin is a devoted friend. The hardly less terrible Gobseck has his own standard of probity, and acts up to it. Esther and Coralie are the very victims of passionate love; love steeped in animalism, it is true, but love still. Balzac was fond of suggesting a parallel between himself and Napoleon; and, in truth, with much else there is this in common between them, that the great novelist in the realms of imagination, like the great Emperor in the sphere of politics and war, looked upon mankind without either love or hate, pity or contempt, as mere pieces in the game of life. In its sublimest heights or in its lowest depths, angelical in purity or bestial in concupiscence, human nature is to Balzac merely a subject, and, in another sense from that of Terence, he thinks nothing that appertains to it foreign from him. But he denies, with earnest indignation, as a calumny, the assertion that his characters are mere inventions. They are real men and women, he maintains, drawn from the life; such as one elbows every day in our decrepit civilization.[1]

Not, indeed, that his work was a mere vulgar transcript from the world around him. He claimed for it a merit beyond that of the professed historian as being more truthful. "J'ai mieux fait que l'historien: je suis plus libre."[2] Balzac is a realist, if you will; but a realist in quite another sense from that in which the epithet applies to certain writers of the present day,

[1] See Madame Surville's *Notice Biographique* prefixed to his correspondence. *Œuvres*, vol. xxiv. p. lxv.

[2] *Avant-Propos: Œuvres*, vol. i. p. 10.

who seek in his great name a sanction for their coarse studies from the shambles and latrines of human nature. There is as much difference between his work and—let us say—M. Zola's, as there is between a portrait by Holbein or Titian and a cheap photograph. The one is a mere lifeless imitation; in the other, beneath the external lineaments, the hand of the artist has "divinely found" the man. Balzac is immeasurably removed from the naturalism of which I speak—a naturalism which is the very contrary of the natural, because even when materially true it is artistically false. "Art," as Balzac himself says, "is idealized creation." The ideal is the highest truth. Gozlan relates a conversation between him and the famous detective Vidocq, which it may be worth while to quote, because it brings out forcibly what I am here insisting upon.

Vidocq had observed, "You are in error, M. de Balzac, in relating stories of another world, when the real (*la réalité*) is there, before your eyes, close to your ears, under your hand."

"Ah, you believe in the real," Balzac replies. "You are charming. I should not have thought you so *naïf*. The real! Tell me something about it, for you have just returned from an expedition into that fine country. But come now, *it is we artists who create the real.*"

"No, M. de Balzac."

"Yes, M. Vidocq. Now look at this fine Montreuil peach. That is *the real.* What *you* would call real grows wild in the woods, upon a wild stock.

Well, it is absolutely worthless, that wild peach of yours, small, sour, bitter, uneatable. Now look at the real peach, which I hold in my hand, as a hundred years of cultivation have made it, with cuttings to right and left, transplantings into dry or light soil, and due graftings; this peach, as one eats it, perfuming the mouth and the heart, this exquisite peach is our creation, and it is the only real peach. Just so it is with me. I obtain the real in my novels, as Montreuil obtains it in peaches. 'Je suis jardinier en livres.'"[1]

The metaphor may be carried further. Balzac is not a gardener devoted to the production of any one species of fruit or flower. It is not only men, but man, that he seeks to present; not isolated types, but a society. His garden is a microcosm. He aspired to the name of historian, and he knew well that history is a science. It is a profound observation of Aristotle that "he who really wishes to be master of his especial craft, and to grasp it in its entirety, must work his own way up to the highest general conceptions, and, in so far as they admit of determinate knowledge, make himself master of them, since it is with general conceptions that science is concerned." Balzac, probably, had never heard of this canon of the Stagirite, but he had fully appropriated and laid to heart the truth which it contains. "Il a saisi la vérité," M. Taine remarks, "parcequ'il a saisi les ensembles; sa puissance systématique a donné à ses peintures l'unité avec la force; avec l'intérêt la

[1] *Balzac Chez Lui*, p. 215.

fidélité." There can be no question that the object to which his vast and varied powers were unswervingly applied, the object to which his life was given, was to make his *Comédie Humaine* what, according to Cicero, comedy ought to be: "imitationem vitæ: speculum consuetudinis; imaginem veritatis."

And if from Balzac we turn to his contemporaries, there is a consensus of the weightiest testimony that the *Comédie Humaine* does in truth possess this character. A great cloud of witnesses might be cited in corroboration of Balzac's testimony as to the moral and spiritual characteristics of his age. But enough has been said, I think, to justify the conclusion that he is the witness of truth—that in his *Comédie Humaine* we have, as George Sand sorrowfully confesses, "the hard and sad reality of contemporary men and things."

(VII)

Balzac's conception of his work included, however, more than the delineation of the social and moral phenomena of his age: more, too, than the exhibition of the ideas and passions expressed in those phenomena. Théophile Gautier has called him "the Dante of the *Comédie Humaine;*" and so he is, in the fullest sense of the phrase. The great Florentine poet is for us not only the exponent of the theology, philosophy, morality, politics, of the men of his generation, initiating us into the heart of their mystery, and unravelling

for us the riddle of their lives; he is also their judge, giving sentence upon persons and events according to his reading of the eternal and unchanging law which ever rules in human affairs, and which carries with it its own penal sanctions. So Balzac aspired to do more than to paint the types and conditions of nineteenth-century civilization, and to seize the meaning hidden in the immense assemblage of figures, of passions, of events. "Enfin," he writes, "après avoir cherché, je ne dis pas trouvé, cette raison, ce moteur social, ne fallait-il pas méditer sur les principes naturels et voir en quoi les sociétés s'écartent ou se rapprochent de la règle éternelle du vrai, du beau?"[1] A task of might truly, but the fitting complement of his design. Let us briefly see after what manner he has executed it.

And here let me note, in passing, a strange misapprehension into which many of his critics have fallen; among them, one of the most considerable, Taine. Balzac, as Taine judges, finds passions and interests the motive principles of the world. He finds society a conflict of self-seeking, where force, guided by craft, is triumphant; where passion pierces silently and violently the dykes opposed to it; where the received morality consists in the apparent respect for conventionalities and the law.[2] This is undoubtedly true; but it is not the whole truth. Balzac does not recognize this as the normal condition of human society; on the contrary,

[1] *Avant-Propos: Œuvres*, vol. i. p. 6.
[2] *Nouveaux Essais*, p. 155.

he regards it as an abnormal condition. He holds the world to be "out of joint;" sick of a malady which he defines as egoism; and his *Comédie Humaine* may be truly described as a vast disquisition upon the pathology of this malady, an exhibition of it, as he observes, "in its thousand forms." He finds it at the very root of the public order of France, and accounts it the enduring cause of his country's disasters. "*Le moi humain*," he says, "is the only thing the Revolution has left us." It is a favourite doctrine with him that every animal has its dominant instinct, and that the dominant instinct of a man is the spirit of the family.[1] Every country, he holds, which does not take as its base the *patria potestas* is without assured existence. And in France, he judges, the family is extinct; the Revolution dealt it a fatal blow. "En coupant la tête à Louis XVI. la Révolution a coupé la tête à tous les pères de famille. Il n'y a plus de famille aujourd'hui; il n'y a plus que des individus. En proclamant l'égalité des droits à la succession paternelle, ils ont tué l'esprit de famille: ils ont créé le fisc." And he adds that the question lies between two systems: "Ou constituer l'État par la famille ou le constituer par l'intérêt personnel; la démocratie ou l'aristocratie; la discussion ou l'obéissance; le Catholicisme ou l'indifférence religieuse; voilà la question en peu de mots."[2] It is into the mouth of the Duc de Chaulieu, a Minister of State whom he gives to Louis XVIII., that Balzac puts

[1] *Mémoires de Deux Jeunes Mariées: Œuvres*, vol. i. p. 175.
[2] *Ibid.*

these words; but there can be no doubt that they represent his own opinions. They are, of course, in direct opposition to those much-vaunted "principles of '89," which, as expressed in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, rest upon the proposition that "men are born and remain free, and equal in rights." Balzac finds that, as a matter of fact, men are not born in the freedom and equality of rights of a wholly visionary state of nature, but in the dependence and inequality which are main notes of civil society in all its forms, from the most simple to the most complex. And he holds, as a matter of theory, that not dull and impossible uniformity, but well-ordered gradation is the true conception of the political edifice. For him, in the words which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of the wisest of the Greeks, it is "degree," which is "the ladder of all high designs."

> "Take but degree away, untune that string,
> And hark! what discord follows: each thing meets
> In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters
> Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores
> And make a sop of all this solid globe.
> Force should be right, or rather right and wrong,
> Between whose endless jar justice resides,
> Should lose their names, and so should justice too.
> This chaos when degree is suffocate
> Follows the choking."

But Balzac was no prophet of the past; he was not of those who "mistook remembrances for hopes;" who supposed that the tide of human affairs could be rolled back; that the *régime* of the eighteenth century could be revived in the nineteenth. Whether,

indeed, he had any but the most superficial acquaintance with the course of French history during the two hundred years which preceded the great Revolution, I think very doubtful. I find in his pages no adequate appreciation of the Cæsarism which, from the destruction of the Catholic League at Ivry, pursued its monstrous course, crushing out one after another the old liberties of France, reducing her nobles from the monarch's peers to his titled lacqueys, and the spiritualty from an independent order—dear to the people for a thousand years as the champion of their rights—to an odious instrument of civil tyranny; in a word, over-weighting with absolutism the social fabric, while the new philosophy was undermining its very foundations. Like Napoleon, Balzac would seem to have had little true knowledge of the past, but a supreme eye for the present. He discerned clearly enough that one of the most hopeless elements in the political situation of his country was the absolute incapacity of the old *noblesse*, who, from 1815 to 1830, fully vindicated the great Emperor's judgment of them, that they were capable of committing any *bêtise*. On the other hand, he had the smallest respect for the parody of English party government—itself the accident of an accident—which it was attempted to establish in France. He had an entire disbelief in the efficacy of constitutional nostrums in a country destitute of the most rudimentary conceptions of civil and religious liberty; a country where, as Lamennais learnt by bitter experience, "personne presque ne comprend, personne ne veut réellement la liberté;

tous aspirent à la tyrannie et le disent hautement et en sont fiers." He had read the lesson, written in characters of blood and fire still freshly legible in his youth, that the pseudo-Liberalism of "the principles of '89" issues in the most odious despotism. But he knew well, that "the Revolution is implanted in the soil,[1] written in the laws, living in the popular mind of France." Still its virus, as he judged, would, with more or fewer paroxysms, wear itself out. Sooner or later, he held, the public order must be reconstituted. "L'avenir, c'est l'homme social." "The great man who will save us from the shipwreck to which we are hastening"—it is M. Benassis, the *Médecin de campagne*, who is the speaker—"will no doubt avail himself of individualism to remake the nation; but, pending that regeneration, we are in the age of material interests and Positivism. Woe to the country so constituted!" These were Balzac's political views, and the course of events since his

[1] "'Vous avez mis le doigt sur la grande plaie de la France,' dit le juge de paix. 'La cause du mal gît dans le titre *des Successions* du Code civil, qui ordonne le partage égal des biens. Là est le plon dont le jeu perpétuel émiette le territoire, individualise les fortunes en leur ôtant une stabilité nécessaire, et qui décomposant sans recomposer jamais, finira par tuer la France. La Révolution française a emis un virus destructif auquel les journées de juillet viennent de communiquer une activité nouvelle. Ce principe morbifique est l'accession du paysan à la propriété.'"—*Le Curé de Village: Œuvres*, xiv. p. 177. And in another page he writes: "L'Angleterre doit son existence à la loi quasi féodale qui attribue les terres et l'habitation de la famille aux ainés. Avec le morcellement de la propriété l'Angleterre n'existerait déjà plus. La haute propriété, les lords, y gouvernent le mécanisme social. Au lieu de faire la guerre aux capacités, de les annuller, de les méconnaître, l'aristocratie anglaise les cherche, les recompense, et se les assimile constamment."—*Mémoires de Deux Jeunes Mariées: Œuvres*, vol. i. p. 182.

death in 1850 has gone far to justify them.[1] Is there any more dreary page in the world's annals than that whereon is written the history of France during those years? I do not speak merely of loss of men and territory, of shameful humiliations and disastrous spoliations, but of far more deadly evils; of the complete dissolution of the bonds of thought, of that extinction of public spirit, which is the moral death of a nation, of the ostracism of the best from the government, while hungry demagogues, skilfully trading upon popular passions, rise from communistic *cabarets* to the seats of princes. Nor can the future be doubtful. The *bourgeoisie* has been weighed in the balances, and found wanting. Its kingdom is numbered and finished, and shall be taken from it by the *prolétariat.*

Balzac, then, was a Monarchist.[2] He also professed himself a Catholic. "I write," he tells us in

[1] The following words might pass for a prophecy: "Nous fabriquons des propriétaires mendiants chez le peuple, des demi-savants chez les petits bourgeois, et *Chacun chez soi*, *chacun pour soi*, qui avait fait son effet dans les classes élevées en juillet de cette année (1830), aura bientôt gangrené les classes moyennes. Un prolétariat déshabitué de sentiments, sans autre dieu que l'envie, sans autre fanatisme que le désespoir de la faim, sans foi ni croyance, s'avancera et mettera le pied sur le cœur du pays. L'étranger, grandi sous la loi monarchique, nous trouvera sans roi avec la royauté, sans lois avec la légalité, sans propriétaires avec la propriété, sans gouvernment avec l'élection, sans force avec le libre arbitre, sans bonheur avec l'égalité."—*Le Curé de Village: Œuvres*, xiv. p. 180.

[2] "J'appartiens au petit nombre de ceux qui veulent resister, à ce qu'on nomme le peuple, dans son intérêt bien compris. Il ne s'agit plus ni de droits féodaux, comme on le dit aux niais, ni de gentilhommerie; il s'agit de l'État, il s'agit de la vie de la France."—*Mémoires de Deux Jeunes Mariées: Œuvres*, vol. i. p. 175.

his Introduction, "in the light of two eternal truths,—Religion and Monarchy: the two needs of France, which contemporary events proclaim, and towards which every writer of sound sense ought to try to bring back our country." Christianity he holds to be "a complete system of repression of the depraved tendencies of man, and the greatest element of social order;"[1] and of Christianity he finds Catholicism the only expression worth considering: for he agrees with Comte,[2] that Protestantism in all its forms is merely Rationalism in different stages of development, its logical issue being Deism, and, in its most extreme phase, systematic Atheism. The doctrine of a life beyond the grave he regards not merely as a supreme consolation, but also as an incomparable instrument of government. In religion he discerns the sole power which sanctions social laws.[3] Hence it is that he accounts as the worst foes of his country the doctrinaires who, for the last century, have laboured with the violence of energumens to banish God from the public order, and who have made it the first principle of their system to withdraw the people from the influence of the Church. "Toute association," he writes, "ne peut-elle vivre que par le sentiment religieux, le seul qui dompte les rébellions de l'esprit, les calculs de l'ambition, et les avidités de tout genre."[4] "Every moral reformation not supported by a great

[1] *Avant-Propos: Œuvres*, vol. i. p. 7.

[2] See a well-known passage of the *Cours de Philosophie Positive*, vol. v. p. 540.

[3] *Le Médecin de Campagne: Œuvres*, vol. xiv. p. 491.

[4] *L'Envers de l'Histoire Contemporaine: Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 679.

religious sentiment, and pursued within the fold of the Church, rests upon a foundation of sand. All the religious observances, so minute and so little understood, which Catholicism ordains, are so many dykes necessary to hold back the tempests of evil within."[1] Hence, "teaching, or rather education by religious bodies, is the great principle of national existence; the sole means of diminishing the sum of evil, and of increasing the sum of good in any society. Thought —le principe des maux et des biens—can be prepared, subdued, directed, only by religion."[2]

It would, however, be a great error to suppose that Balzac sees in religion merely an instrument of Government; in the altar only an aid to police. It is clear that the Catholic Church presented herself to him as the most considerable fact in the world's history. Her incommunicable attributes of unity, sanctity, universality; the perfection of the hierarchical organization which centres round and culminates in the Apostolic throne; the sublimity of her ritual, "affecting the imagination through the senses, and the emotions through the imagination;" the marvellous adaptation of her doctrines to the needs of human nature;[3] her safeguards for innocence, her

[1] *La Muse du Département: Œuvres*, vol. vi. p. 542.

[2] *Avant-Propos: Œuvres*, vol. i. 7.

[3] "Depuis le fétichisme informe des sauvages jusqu'aux gracieuses inventions de la Grèce jusqu'aux profondes et ingénieuses doctrines de l'Égypte et des Indes, traduites par des cultes riants ou terribles, il y a une conviction dans l'homme, celle de sa chute, de son péché, d'où vient partout l'idée des sacrifices et du rachat. . . . Tout est rachetable; le catholicisme est dans cette parole: de là ses adorables sacraments, qui aident au triomphe de la grâce et soutiennent le pécheur."—*Le Curé de Village: Œuvres*, vol. xiv. p. 116.

remedies for sin, the celestial light and fragrance which she diffuses around her as she moves through the centuries with majestic steps that tell of her divine origin, fascinate and overcome him. She is, for him, "la grande république des âmes; la seule Église qui a mis l'humanité dans sa voie;"[1] and it is manifest, from many passages, both in his novels and in his correspondence, that he had profoundly studied her system and her doctrines. Thus, he writes, in one place: "Il n'y a que ceux qui voient Dieu qui l'aiment. Mais d'ailleurs en quoi se fondent les croyances religieuses? Sur le sentiment de l'infini qui est en nous, qui nous prouve une autre nature, qui nous mène par une déduction sévère à la religion, a l'espoir."[2] It would be difficult to state the case better. The whole doctrine of Pascal is there in germ.

Still it seems neither temerarious nor uncharitable to assert that Balzac's apprehension of Catholicism was rather notional than real. It attracts, it subdues him as a consummate work of art, as a profound system of policy, as a vast engine of moral power. But this is very different from the spiritual discernment, the personal apprehension of religious faith. The *Comédie Humaine* itself, not to go further, supplies only too strong evidence upon this matter. A plausible answer might, indeed, be made to the charge of immorality sometimes brought against it; a charge much like that urged by Rousseau against Molière's

[1] *Le Curé de Village: Œuvres*, vol. xiv. p. 185.
[2] *Correspondence: Œuvres*, vol. xxiv. p. 251.

plays, of being "une école de vices et de mauvais mœurs." It is a saying as true as it is hackneyed, that a nice man is a man of nasty ideas. And Jean-Jacques, the purist, has probably done more to debauch the popular mind of France than all the French playwrights put together; nay, than any of his fellow-leaders in that "progressive movement," one main feature of which has ever been uncompromising opposition to the virtue of purity. The *Comédie Humaine*, like the plays of Molière, is a picture of the manners of the age; and if Balzac's picture is worse than Molière's, it is because Balzac's age was worse than Molière's. In the seventeenth century, we find religion, with its sacred sanctions, dominating the public order: society, as a whole, believed, whatever the shortcomings of individual practice. In the nineteenth, in the twentieth century, it is otherwise. Then, as Sainte-Beuve has happily said, "le fond était de foi;" now, "le fond est de doute." But it is quite certain that Balzac lends no charms to vice, and supplies no irritants to sensual passion. Indeed, this seems to be pretty generally allowed by his censors. The gist of the complaint against him is, not that he is the minister of impurity—which would be a small offence, or no offence at all, in the eyes of some of his severest judges—but that he presents a terrible picture of human nature, and preaches a despairing pessimism. To this his answer is, in effect, that of Martin, in *Candide:* "C'est que j'ai vécu." He urges that he is "as moral as experience,"—and that he did not write "virginibus puerisque," but for men. And it

may be forcibly contended that it was well to put a picture of man and society, in its unvarnished truth, before an age which is summoned to embrace the religion of humanity. In such an age, deafened with assertions of "the dignity of man as a rational being, apart from theological determinations," Balzac holds up the mirror to nature, and exhibits no abstractions, no *individua vaga*, but the men and women of the concrete world, in all their littleness, their turpitude, their radical corruption. It is the loudest sermon *De Contemptu Mundi* ever preached, and its great force lies in this—that the preacher is not declaiming from some worm-eaten homily, but is passionlessly unfolding the great book of contemporary life. Still it is difficult to suppose that any man who had personally felt the power of a religion, the main notes of which are purity and charity, could have written the *Comédie Humaine*. To depict good and evil without predilection or repugnance or moral end, to behold humanity as it lies in its misery, naked and wounded and full of sores, and to survey it scientifically, probing its wounds, sounding its ulcers, removing every shred of rag or fragment of plaister which hides its foulness and dishonour, coldly and unmoved, with no tear of pity, no word of compassion—this would be impossible for such a man, for his position is not that of a mere spectator in the world: he has a task to accomplish in it as a fellow-worker with the Great Physician.

The truth would seem to be that, in Balzac, for religious faith we find sentimentality, and in this he is the true exponent of his age. It is observed by

Heine, with his usual keen incisiveness, in one of his letters to Lewald, "The French cannot be false to their education. They are all more or less materialists, according as they have received, for a longer or shorter term, the education based upon the materialistic philosophy which is imparted in France. . . . Sentimentality is a product of materialism. The materialist carries in his soul the vague consciousness that all in this world is not matter. It is of no use for his limited understanding to show him the material character of everything; his soul instinctively rises up in rebellion. He is from time to time tormented by the necessity of recognizing in things a purely spiritual origin, and these desires, these vague wants, produce the vague effect which we call sentimentality. Sentimentality is the despair of matter, which, not being able to suffice for itself, dreams with undecided and undefined longing of a better sphere." The true account of Balzac would appear to be indicated in these words, which might be strikingly illustrated by the theories of the nature of man and of the unseen world broached by him from time to time. Thus, in the *Peau de Chagrin* thought is said to be a material form like vapour, a fluid mass of which man directs the projection at pleasure; and in it, as we read in *César Birotteau*, electricity plays a great part. Elsewhere he speaks of ideas as completely organized beings which live in the invisible world and influence our destinies, and he refers miracles to animal magnetism. At one time he was greatly fascinated by Swedenborg,

and *Séraphita* is little more than an exposition of certain doctrines borrowed from that great mystic. At another he appears to have been under the influence of a kind of Pantheism which mingles all the existences and phenomena of nature in a vague and confused unity, and makes an end of all personality, human and divine. And in his Introduction he gives a sketch of what may be called, in Diderot's phrase, "a system of Platonico-Pythagorico-Peripatetico-Paracelsico Christianity," essaying to effect a compromise between the naturalists and the mystics, between the spirit of Buffon and the spirit of St. Martin.

I am far from denying that in these speculations this great genius may have been dimly prescient of that idealistic Monism to which a widely influential school of European thought has, of late years, been slowly but surely tending. But I am here concerned with them as showing how deeply he had drunk into the spirit of the age. As the *Divine Comedy* is informed by the philosophy of the medieval school, so majestic in its universal congruity, so the *Comédie Humaine* reflects the chaos of opinions distracting the times in which it was written. In this, as in other respects, it is the true expression of the society in which its author lived. Mere fragment as it is of his vast design, it fulfils his purpose and possesses the character which he claimed for it. It is a great treasure-house of documents, which no student of the history of our age can afford to neglect, upon a phase of modern civilization. The chief note of that

civilization, Heine has pointed out, is the absence from it of faith; and if there is any lesson more emphatically taught than another by the history of man it is this—that faith of some sort, be it religious, political, or philosophical, is as necessary to his moral being as air to his physical organism; a faith shared by others, and forming a spiritual atmosphere. It was the work of the eighteenth century to dry up the sources of faith alike in its divine and human expressions. The French Revolution, the inevitable result of Bourbon Cæsarism and the sensualistic philosophy, was the outward visible sign of the overthrow of the principles upon which the old order had rested. It was then that Napoleon arose to proclaim, amid the roar of his victorious cannon, the new gospel that force was the measure of truth, success the test of right, and personal interest the law of action. The teaching was greedily drunk in by the generation into which Balzac was born. And we have the outcome of it in the civilization which found in him "its most original, most appropriate, and most penetrating historian."[1]

[1] *Ste. Beuve: Causeries du Lundi*, vol. ii. p. 443.

V

A NINETEENTH-CENTURY SAVONAROLA

(I)

Félicité de Lamennais is unquestionably among the great names of the last century. Perhaps the time has now come when it is possible fairly to estimate him and his work. It is worth while to attempt to do this, for in him we see more fully and clearly than in any one else, the working of the spiritual forces of his times: more fully and clearly than in De Maistre, or Bonald, or Châteaubriand, or Comte—all true representatives and exponents of the *Zeitgeist*. In Lamennais, Mr. Gibson well observes, "a severe and ruthless logic, a by no means scanty fund of cynicism, and a somewhat pronounced development of the critical faculty, were strangely mingled with a wild and stormy temperament: a temperament in which a daring persistent energy was often rudely broken down by uncouth, almost incomprehensible attacks of exaggerated melancholy, explaining at once the value and the deep pathos of his life."[1] The pathos of

[1] *The Abbé de Lamennais and the Liberal Catholic Movement in France*, by the Hon. W. Gibson, p. 2.

Lamennais' life is evident enough. The value is not so evident. What I propose to do is, first, briefly to sketch his career, and then to try to indicate its real significance.

(II)

Félicité de Lamennais was born on June 19, 1782, at St. Malo, in the house which is now No. 3, Rue St. Vincent. The family name was really Robert; and it was his father, Pierre-Louis Robert, a considerable shipowner, who added to it the designation "de la Mennais"—which is a Breton word meaning mountain—on being ennobled by Louis XVI. in 1788. That honour was bestowed at the request of the Estates of Brittany, in recognition of Pierre-Louis's many public-spirited acts, and, especially, of his feeding the poor of St. Malo at his own expense during a famine. Félicité—the name was commonly abbreviated among his intimates into Féli—was the fourth of six children, and was from his birth puny and fragile. "Of an extraordinary and feverish vivacity," writes Mr. Gibson, "resulting from a nervous excitable temperament, he was in childhood domineering, irritable, and subject to fits of anger, which very often ended by fainting. He kept aloof from other children and rarely joined their games; a vague feeling of superiority seemed to incline him to solitude." Truly, "the child is father of the man." When he was seven years old he lost his mother, and in after-life he used to say that the only two things he could

remember about her were her saying her rosary and her playing on the violin. It is stated by members of his family that after his mother's death he became still more sad and reserved; breaking, however, through the monotony and gloom of his existence by unexpected outbursts of self-assertion. The fever of those times of Revolution crept into his blood; and as he grew into youth and early manhood the licence of thought and action which characterized the period, infected his mind and stained his life. But in all that tract of years religion was also silently working upon him. Pierre-Louis, though outwardly conforming to revolutionary anti-Christianity, still adhered in secret to the Catholic creed, and practised the Catholic worship. "Had any of his Republican friends been present on certain days in a small upper room in the Hôtel de la Mennais"—I am quoting from Mr. Gibson's book—"they would have been somewhat taken aback by the unexpected picture which would have presented itself to them. There, in the early hours of the morning, they would have seen a group of kneeling worshippers, from time to time timorously glancing around or starting at the slightest movement in the street below, while in their midst, standing before an improvised altar, a non-juring priest was saying Mass. They might have noticed one of the sons of the house, Jean-Marie, performing the office of server, while his younger brother, Féli, sat by the door and listened anxiously for the slightest sound."

In 1804, Félicité's elder brother, Jean, who, from the first, had given proofs of ardent piety and a strong

sacerdotal vocation, was ordained priest; and the same year Félicité made his First Communion. He was then of the age of twenty-two. In 1807 we find the brothers at a small country house of the family's in the Breton woods, a few miles from Dinan, called La Chênaie—The Oaks—afterwards destined to become no less famous than Port-Royal. Ill-health had driven the Abbé Jean thither, and the companionship of that pure and saintly soul exercised a powerful influence over Félicité's mind and heart. It was for him a time of interior strife and combat—so much we know, although no details of his spiritual troubles remain to us. He had always been an earnest though desultory student, and now, more than ever, he sought relief in books from the overwhelming pressure of thought. Hitherto, he had been doubtful about his career in the world. Sometimes he had thought of engaging in his father's business, sometimes of emigrating. Now, at last, he appears to have realized that his true vocation was to write.

(III)

It was at this time that the relations between Pope Pius VII. and Napoleon, which, for many months, had become more and more strained, began to assume the character of a decided feud. There are few things more discreditable in the history of the First Empire —and that is saying a great deal—than its ecclesiastical policy. In 1804, Pius VII. had officiated at the

coronation of the Emperor, hoping thereby to set the seal to the restoration of the Catholic worship in France, and to rivet the claim of the Church to the support of "the foremost man of all this world:" such Napoleon then seemed. But the ambition of Bonaparte, growing with what it fed upon, aimed at nothing less than dominating the souls as well as the bodies of men. He now sought, as the historian of the Gallican Church puts it, "to govern the consciences of his subjects through the vassalage of the Pope and the Bishops, while he controlled them physically by the power of the sword." To compass this end, he formed the design of reducing the Supreme Pontiff to the position of chief imperial Prelate. When First Consul he had recognized the wisdom of "the immemorial tradition which had annexed a certain portion of secular territorial authority to the spiritual headship of Christendom." Nay, at his coronation he had solemnly guaranteed the rights of the Pope to the patrimony of St. Peter. But within a year of that event—significant commentary upon the worth of his promises—imperial troops seized and occupied the Pontifical port of Ancona; and in reply to the Pope's remonstrances, the Emperor informed him, in effect, that if he desired to retain, in any sense, his temporal authority, he could only do so by owning the suzerainty of France. The friends of France must be his friends; the enemies of France must be his enemies; he must make common cause with the policy of France, and abet the aggressions of France upon the rights and liberties of the other nations of the world. The Emperor had not

divined the patient heroism concealed beneath "the inflexible sweetness" of Pius VII. The Pope's reply to his outrageous demand was a *non possumus*. The Emperor rejoined by sending a division of the French army to occupy Rome, and to plant a battery of cannon before the Quirinal, where the Pontiff was residing. Shortly afterwards Pius VII. was conveyed to Savona, a small town in North Italy, and was there confined and strictly guarded, while the members of the Sacred College resident in Rome were removed to Paris. The Pope, following the example of his predecessors in the like cases, betook himself to his spiritual weapons. As the French sees fell vacant, he refused to institute to them the successors nominated by the Emperor.

Thus was the contest between military despotism and the spiritual power formally declared. Napoleon had little dreamt of the opposition which he experienced from the Pope, and which unquestionably contributed to his eventual downfall. He resorted to threats, and declared that "following the discipline of earlier ages," his Bishops should dispense with the Papal bulls of institution. But Pius VII. remained steadfast in his resolve to abstain from all Pontifical acts in respect of the Church in France until his personal independence and freedom of action were restored to him. And soon twenty-seven French sees were vacant in consequence of his persistence in his purpose. It was at this moment that Félicité de Lamennais began to write. Devout Catholics in France—the ten thousand men who had not bowed

the knee to the image of Baal—were ardent in their sympathy with the Pontiff. And nowhere was the ardour greater than in the saintly soul of Jean de Lamennais. He it was who supplied the materials for Félicité's first book, published in 1808—*Réflexions sur l'État de l'Église en France:* a work exhibiting but scanty promise of the literary power which the author was soon to display, but giving, with no uncertain sound, the same note of opposition to State control of religion which his later writings sent as a trumpet-blast throughout Europe. It was seized by the imperial police, and the two brothers proceeded to the composition of another treatise on the question of the institution of Bishops, then so keenly debated, strenuously upholding, of course, the Papal rights. The police again intervened and prevented its publication, nor did it appear until Napoleon's retirement to Elba. During the Hundred Days, Félicité withdrew to London, where he made the acquaintance of a refugee priest, the Abbé Carron, whose sympathetic sanctity largely influenced his future life. In 1809 he had received minor orders, not without grave misgivings. His friends—especially the Abbé Carron, now his spiritual director—urged him to proceed to the irrevocable step of the priesthood. He hesitated, and became more and more timid as the time for actual decision drew near. But his advisers pressed him more and more; his brother, the Abbé Jean, alone holding back until the last, no doubt from secret misgivings as to his vocation. At the beginning of 1816 he was made sub-deacon. On March 9,

1816, he was ordained priest. A short time before his ordination he wrote to his sister, Madame Blaize: "I certainly have not followed my own inclination in deciding upon an ecclesiastical career." In after-times he was wont to affirm that at his first Mass, as he held the newly consecrated Host in his trembling hands, he heard a voice that distinctly said to him: "I call upon you to carry My cross; nothing but the cross. . . . Remember!"

(IV)

The Abbé Félicité de Lamennais, as he was now, "appears to have settled down to his normal occupations, and to have reconciled himself by degrees to his new position." Public affairs interested him in the highest degree, especially on their ecclesiastical side. The restoration of the Bourbon monarchy he saw with joy. He had hated the Emperor as an incarnation of the Revolution. But he soon discovered that the legitimate King followed the same route in Church policy as the popular Cæsar, though indeed *haud passibus æquis*. The Concordat of 1801 remained in force. And "the idea of a State Church, which had seemed almost respectable as part of a scheme for a world-wide Empire, became contemptible when it reduced religion and its ministers to the position of mere salaried agents of a monarchy, owing its very existence to the intervention of foreign Powers." It was then that Félicité set himself to the composition

of the *Essay on Indifference*, which at once gave him a European reputation. The keynote of the book is struck in the fine passage at the beginning :—

"Convinced, in spite of itself, of the necessity of connecting heaven with earth and man with his Creator, the statecraft of to-day enters the sanctuary and brings forth from it the Supreme Being who is adored there. It clothes Him in rags of purple, puts a reed into His hand, on His head a crown of thorns, and it shows Him to the people, saying: 'Behold your God!' Can it be wondered at that religion, thus humiliated and dishonoured, is received with indifference? After eighteen hundred years of fighting and of triumphs, Christianity at length meets with the same fate as its Founder. Summoned, so to speak, not before a proconsul, but before the human race, the question is put to it, *Art thou a king?* Is it true, as these accuse thee, that thou pretendest to rule over us? Then comes the answer: It is you who have said it: *I am a king.* I reign over minds by enlightening them; and over hearts by guiding their movements, and even their very desires; I reign over society by the good that I have done. The world was buried in the darkness of error: *I came to bring truth to it.* Hence my mission: *he who loves the truth, hears me.* But this saying has already ceased to have a meaning to perverted reason; and must be explained to it. *What is truth?* asks the stupid, absent-minded judge; and without waiting for an answer, he goes out, declares that he *finds no fault* in the accused, and washing his hands, gives religion over to the multitude, to become, first their plaything, and then their victim."

The theme of the first volume—originally published by itself—is the necessity of religion as a social factor, and the absurdity of the prevailing indifference. It was a declaration of war against the dominant Gallicanism. Of the philosophic theory set forth in

the subsequent volumes I shall say a word hereafter. Here I may remark that the work was well received by the Papal theologians, and that on visiting Rome, in the summer of 1824, its author was warmly welcomed by Pope Leo XII. Indeed, it seems clearly established that the Pontiff designed to raise him to the Cardinalate, and would have done so but for the opposition of the French Government.

Félicité de Lamennais was now forty years of age, and the bent of his mind was profoundly and ardently Catholic. It was at this time that he brought out his translation of the *Imitation of Christ*—perhaps the best rendering into any modern language of that incomparable treatise—adding to each of the chapters reflections of his own, characterized by extreme beauty and delicacy of thought, and by profound religious feeling. In 1826 he published *La Religion considérée dans ses Rapports avec l'Ordre politique et social*, in which he attacks the Gallican position in uncompromising terms, and sets forth what would now be called extremely Ultramontane views. The Government decided upon prosecuting the author as impugning the Constitution. He was accused of "effacing the boundaries which separate spiritual from secular authority, of proclaiming the supremacy and infallibility of the Pope, and of recognizing his despotic power." The charge was not denied. He was convicted and sentenced to a fine of thirty-six francs. This trial, with its lame and impotent conclusion, was, of course, a moral victory for Lamennais. But the Government of Charles X. continued to pursue the Napoleonic

policy towards the Church. That policy was, in fact, of Bourbon origin. Its staunchest defender had been Louis XIV., who had, indeed, stereotyped it—so to speak—in the famous Four Articles which professed to embody "The Gallican Liberties."

I wonder how many people accounted educated—how many, for example, of those who will peruse these pages—have an accurate conception of what "The Gallican Liberties" really are. I feel sure the number is not so great as to make a very brief exposition of them superfluous. "The Gallican Liberties," then, were represented as the ancient prerogatives of the National Church of France (*usus canonum, observantia juris antiqui*); a body of customs, privileges, and immunities, limiting the exercise of the Pontifical jurisdiction in that country. And, as I have just observed, they are supposed to be summed up in the Four Articles adopted by an Assembly of the French clergy in 1682 at the instance of Louis XIV., then at variance with Pope Innocent XI., in consequence of his arbitrary extension to all the dioceses in his kingdom of the right called *Regalia*, which he possessed only in some of them—the right, that is, of enjoying the revenues and patronage of a vacant see. The First of the Four Articles denies that kings and princes are subject to any ecclesiastical power with regard to their temporal government. The Second declares the full force and perpetual obligation of the third and fourth sessions of the Council of Constance, which Roman theologians hold to apply in their fulness only to the particular set of circumstances which called them

forth; in other words, this article declares the subordination of the Pope to a General Council, and made it easy for the Bishops of France, at the instigation of the Government, whose creatures they were, to defy Papal authority. The Third asserts the inviolability of the ancient rules, customs, and institutions of the Church and Realm of France; a vague assertion, serving in practice to support any opposition to Papal authority which the secular power might see fit to make. The Fourth affirms that the Pope's judgment in matters of faith is not irreformable unless confirmed by the consent of the Church; a proposition the reverse of which has in our own days been laid down by the Vatican Council. As a matter of fact, these "Gallican Liberties" were practically Gallican servitudes. "The Gallican principle," as Cardinal Newman accurately puts it, "is the vindication of the Church, not into independence, but into State patronage. The liberties of the Gallican Church are its *establishment*—its becoming, in Scripture phrase, the servant of men. . . . They were aimed at the assistance afforded to religion by an external power against the pressure of the temporal power within." [1] Fénelon expressed himself with regard to them even more strongly. "In practice," he writes, "the King of France is more the head of the Church than the Pope. Liberty towards the Pope, slavery towards the King. . . . Secular judges go so far as to examine even those Papal bulls which relate only to matters of faith." Such is the system which issued in

[1] *Essays Critical and Historical*, vol. i. p. 109.

the tyranny of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, and in the fraud of the Organic Articles.

In 1828 appeared two Royal Ordinances, of which the first deprived the Jesuits of the right of directing and teaching in colleges, and the second limited the number of clerical seminaries and interfered with their internal discipline. These were really sops thrown by the affrighted Government of Charles X. to the revolutionary Cerberus. It was an attempt, like that made by our Charles I. in an earlier age, to save the monarchy by sacrificing the Church; and it met with the like ill success. It called forth from Lamennais one of his most powerful pamphlets: *Des progrès de la Révolution et de la Guerre contre l'Église.* Lamennais was no great admirer of the Society of Jesus, whose ethos and methods he thought out of date and unsuitable to this new age. He declined to regard their cause as identical with the Catholic cause, but he quite recognized that the attack upon them in the nineteenth century, as in the eighteenth, was simply the outcome of hostility to religion. The cause of the monarch he altogether separated from the Catholic cause. "To identify ourselves," he wrote, "with authority in the form it has assumed under the influence of godless maxims which free it from every rule and all dependence, would be to lean on that which is falling, on a thing which henceforward no mortal power can save, and to alienate the people from religion by sacrificing to a few men, hopelessly blinded, their holiest rights and their legitimate future." In this powerful brochure Lamennais clearly unfolds the conception

now dominating his mind, of the Church as an independent spiritual power and the champion of individual freedom and popular rights. It fell, Mr. Gibson truly says, "like a thunderbolt on the ministerial and politico-ecclesiastical world, and made a great stir throughout Europe and America." One of its immediate results was the formation of the Society of St. Peter, a sort of national league for the diffusion and vindication of Lamennais's teaching. His brother, the Abbé Jean, took a leading part in its organization, and was himself elected its Superior General. Its headquarters were at Malestroit, but its chief interest centred at La Chênaie, where Félicité continued to reside. There the "little dried-up man, with a thin yellow face, simple in manner, abrupt in speech," gathered round him a few young men, "intent on high designs, a thoughtful band," of whom the most notable were Lacordaire and Gerbet, dominating them by his strong personality and kindling in them the fire of his contagious enthusiasm. In 1832 Maurice de Guérin joined the little community, of which he has given such a vivid and delightful picture in one of his letters.

The Revolution of 1830 seemed to Lamennais a just judgment on the monarchy of Charles X. "The vanquished," he wrote, "have in every way deserved their defeat, and that defeat is beyond hope of recovery." He did not admire Louis Philippe, on whose head, he predicted, the crown would weigh heavily. He would himself have preferred a Republic, as he frankly declared. However, the time seemed

ripe for further and more definite action in support of the cause to which he had dedicated himself: the cause of ecclesiastical and popular liberty; he believed the two to be identical. "The strong man," he wrote, "turns his back on the past, and walks with raised head towards the future, that he may take his place therein." "The Future:" it was in October, 1830, that the journal bearing that title was established. The *Avenir* bore for its motto, "God and Liberty." A large extension of the suffrage, frequent elections, liberty of speech, teaching, and opinions were demanded by it. We may refer to it the foundations of the movement called "Liberal Catholic"—not, indeed, very happily; for Lamennais and his friends, while strong Radicals in politics, were as strong Ultramontanes in theology. One of the first results of the foundation of the *Avenir* was to bring to the little band of Mennaisians, as they were beginning to be termed, a brilliant recruit, Charles de Montalembert. He threw himself into the new crusade with the same chivalrous ardour which his ancestors had displayed in going forth to combat for the Holy Land.

The ecclesiastical policy of Louis Philippe, which was merely a continuation of the ecclesiastical policy of Charles X., was, of course, utterly unsatisfactory to Lamennais and his friends, and was bitterly attacked by them in the *Avenir*. An unsuccessful Government prosecution of that journal served merely to advertise it. Its fame spread, its circulation extended, it converted Liberals and Protestants; the Catholic Bishops of Ireland, assembled in Council,

pronounced it to be "a truly Christian publication;" its words found an echo in England, Belgium, and the New World from New Orleans to Boston. Lamennais became one of the most conspicuous figures in France. Nay, for a brief time, he was the most influential man in the Catholic world after the Pope. In 1831 the *Agence Générale for the Defence of Religious Liberty* was founded. It speedily grew into a great political power; and public opinion inclined to look with favour upon the alliance advocated by Lamennais between strong Catholic views and Democracy, between the People and the Pope. But all at once there arose against him what he calls "a vast and inexplicable persecution." He had reckoned without the French Episcopate. Appointed practically by the State, they were, more or less, the servants of the State. They inclined, as Lamennais bitterly said, "to forget that there is in the world a person called the Pope, to whom, since the days of St. Peter, custom has attributed some authority in the Catholic Church." They were more or less attached to the Gallican traditions. They looked with disfavour on the Democratic movement, which appeared to them—as it well might—anti-Christian. They were not in the least disposed to surrender, at Lamennais's bidding, the pecuniary provision—beggarly as it is—made for the Church by the Concordat, and to throw themselves upon Apostolic poverty and freedom. They began to censure the *Avenir* in their pastoral letters. Some of them directly discountenanced its circulation in their dioceses; "on the suspicion of

being concerned in it, professors were deprived of their chairs, and parish priests of their livings." It is just what happened in the Oxford Movement. The ground was cut away by the Episcopate from under the feet of the would-be reformers. The *Avenir* was discontinued on November 13, 1831, after having run for thirteen months. Lamennais eagerly consented to a suggestion of Lacordaire that the Sovereign Pontiff should be asked to pronounce upon the question in debate. Montalembert, too, acquiesced in it, but apparently against his own judgment. And the three made together their famous expedition to the Pontifical Court.

(V)

The story of this expedition has been narrated by Lamennais in the *Affaires de Rome*—that fascinating and melancholy book which perhaps reveals him at his greatest as a master of style—and in letters written by him at the time and published long years afterwards. But he must be read with caution. "That excessive man," a judicious French critic has called him; and with reason. Excess is written on his career from first to last. It seems never to have so much as occurred to him that the time was singularly ill-chosen for seeking the Pontifical blessing upon the principles of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, as interpreted by the Revolution then raging throughout Europe, a movement as threatening to the altar as to the throne. Gregory XVI. a pious monk and somewhat

commonplace official, who a year before had been called to the Chair of St. Peter from a cloister, was almost entirely in the hands of his advisers. "Men to whom religion was as indifferent as it was to all the cabinets of Europe: ambitious, covetous, avaricious, blind and infatuated as the eunuchs of the Lower Empire," is Lamennais's account of them. The picture is certainly drawn in too lurid colours. There is no reason for believing that Gregory's counsellors were worse than the generality of ecclesiastical statesmen, who may not be abnormally pious, but who are not abnormally depraved. It is, however, unquestionable that the dominant thought of the *Curia* was the maintenance of the existing political institutions of the Pontifical States. It is certain that widespread disaffection to the Papal rule was the result of the measures adopted for that end; and that the Government—to quote Mr. Gibson—"came to be identified in the eyes of the Italians with the revival of inquisitorial methods, the encouragement of informers, and secret trials before interested tribunals." The tottering temporal power of the Pope was upheld by the troops of Austria and France; and notes from the Governments of those powers and of Russia, demanding Lamennais's condemnation, had preceded him to Rome. What a moment for requesting the Pontiff to identify himself with the cause of militant democracy! Lamennais had gone to Rome, as he himself expressed it, "to ask the Pope whether it was a crime to take up arms for truth and justice." Gregory, at an audience

granted after many delays and with much reluctance, instead of answering this question, offered him snuff and entertained him with æsthetic small-talk. Lamennais departed sick at heart. Rome, where he had hoped to find the throne of righteousness, the oracle of truth, the ægis of liberty, seemed to him "a great tomb, with nothing but worms and bones inside it." Or, as he expressed it in another of his too-passionate metaphors, "the foulest cesspool which has ever sullied the eyes of men; the vast drains of the Tarquins would be too narrow to give passage to so much uncleanliness." Soon the Encyclical *Mirari Vos* dealt him a blow which was his spiritual death. His greatest love turned to his greatest hate. The light that was in him became darkness. And how great was that darkness! From thence his history is a blank. He went out of the Catholic Church into the wilderness alone; friends and influence left him with the faith. For twenty years he lived alone. And there are few more pathetic scenes in history than his solitary death, unillumined by a ray of trust or hope in the religion of which he had written, "It is my life, because it is the life of humanity."

(VI)

It would take me beyond the limits which I here propose to myself to inquire how far time has vindicated, and is vindicating, the truth of Lamennais's message to the world. Certain it is that the old

alliance between the Papacy and Legitimism is dead and gone. Certain it is that the Encyclicals in which Leo XIII. dealt with the political and social questions of the age are written in a very different tone from Gregory XVI.'s *Mirari Vos*. But no sensible man will blame the Court of Rome, sixty years ago, for not following Lamennais's lead, or, indeed, for repudiating him. No doubt when Lamennais discerned in the Catholic Church "an institution capable of indefinite expansion and adaptability," when he judged that her future is bound up not with kings and aristocracies, but with the people, he judged more correctly than the Popes and Cardinals who condemned him, more correctly than his later self, in his revolt against that condemnation. From the ideal heights in which he dwelt, he beheld the land that was very far off. Those who sat in Moses' seat did not share that Pisgah vision. Unquestionably the course of events from the middle of the nineteenth century has brought the Catholic Church into a position very different from that which she occupied in the days of Pope Gregory and his counsellors. The anti-Christian sectaries of Italy, who overthrew the Temporal Power, fondly hoped—in the words of one of their leaders—"to decapitate the Papacy in Rome." Quite other has been the effect of their rapine and sacrilege. The Roman question seemed to Lamennais to constitute an impassable barrier between the Church and modern democracy. The enemies of the Church have themselves broken down that barrier. Stripped of his petty principality, supported by the

alms of his spiritual children, ruling in the midst even among his enemies, Pius X., as in the discharge of his ecumenical mission he reproves the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, exercises a religious and moral sway for a parallel to which we must go back to the Middle Ages. The principle for which Lamennais fought and suffered, that popular influence is the life of the Papacy—a principle to which the history of the Christian centuries bears ample testimony—is every day receiving more complete recognition. "That the Church is, properly speaking, the City of the Poor, that in its first plan it was built for the poor only, that they are the true citizens of the City of God," was the testimony which Bossuet, constrained by his very allegiance to truth, bore even before Louis XIV. It was delivered in vain to that monarch and his courtiers. It is preached in our own day to the suffering and toiling masses. And they have ears to hear.

Assuredly, if Lamennais "beyond the veil" has knowledge of the present attitude of the rulers of the Church towards the peoples, he may well be consoled for his immediate failure—a failure which was the inevitable consequence of his many mistakes. As the first of these mistakes, and the source, in some sort, of the rest, I must consider his priesthood. He was a priest without vocation, devoid of the ecclesiastical spirit, which is essentially a spirit of humility: and not even suspecting the merit of that other necessary sacerdotal virtue of obedience. His gifts were prophetic, not priestly. Yes: he was one of the goodly

fellowship of those whose eyes have been opened to discern things hidden from their fellows of the race of men, whose lips have been touched with celestial fire to utter forth a higher language than what is heard from the mass of humanity. From earliest youth he was marked off from the vulgar herd by thoughts not as their thoughts, ways not as their ways. We see him, a boy of eight, as Mr. Gibson has pictured him, on the ramparts of St. Malo, his thin, pale face turned towards the sea, watching with deep sad eyes the battlings of wind and wave, listening to the roar of the waters, and brooding over things undreamed of by the men and women around him. "Ils regardent ce que je regarde, mais ils ne voient pas ce que je vois," he said to his companions. It was ever so all his life long. Through the play of petty intrigues, base interests, and sordid motives, which for most men constitute the sum of human existence, he discerned the war of great elemental ideas. Even his letters, Scherer has well remarked, are "an apocalyptic commentary upon the events of the day." But prophets are seldom good men of action. They are idealists. They want the touch of earth necessary for enabling them to deal with practical politics. They are narrow and intolerant because they are dominated by a single overmastering inspiration. Lamennais saw distinctly some great verities; but he saw in part—and he prophesied in part. Not one of his true words has fallen to the ground. No true word ever does. The exaggerations, the distortions, the violences of his fierce and passionate thoughts, may be forgotten.

He suffered sufficiently for them. Such suffering is a prophet's reward. His message is never heard gladly by the scribes and Pharisees. *They* are the guardians of, the witnesses for, tradition. *He* is a revolutionist charged with a burden of woe to them that sit at ease in Zion. It is not in the nature of things that they should hear him gladly.

We may call Lamennais the Savonarola of the nineteenth century: greater than the Apostle of Florence in his intellectual gifts; less in his spirtual, and incalculably more unhappy; for to him the issue was not martyrdom, but apostasy. His intellectual gifts, indeed, we can hardly estimate so highly as did his contemporaries. His famous *Essay on Indifference*, in which he makes absolute scepticism the basis of absolute certitude, is, no doubt, singularly powerful. But the power is rather in isolated passages than in the general argument. It is curiously French in its exaggerations; curiously un-French—if I may so speak—in its want of plan and unity. Moreover, Lamennais fell into what we must account the common fault of generalizers, or makers of systems. They do not sufficiently verify their data, and they mistake their speculations, their hypotheses, for explanations. Also, I personally cannot place the *Paroles d'un Croyant* so high as his most recent biographer places it. Where Mr. Gibson sees "awful grandeur" I find little more than passionate rhetoric. Of course, a prophet is nothing if not rhetorical. A certain feverishness of thought is inseparable from his calling. But whether we agree or disagree with Mr. Gibson's

opinions, certain it is that we have to thank him for a picture alike vivid, sympathetic, and, in the main, true, of one of the most striking personalities in the history of the last century.

VI

CARDINAL WISEMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

(I)

Cardinal Wiseman died in 1865. His *Life* was not published till 1897.[1] There are two reasons why, as it appears to me, the delay may be accounted not unfortunate. It is far easier now to judge Cardinal Wiseman fairly and impartially, than it would have been at any time during the episcopate of his immediate successor. And in Mr. Wilfrid Ward he has found quite an ideal biographer. It is not merely that Mr. Ward writes with a singular fulness of knowledge, an unusual discrimination of judgment, a rare psychological power, and a candour that might satisfy even Othello. He possesses the still more unfrequent gift of sympathetic diagnosis—a gift as essential to high excellence in the literary as in the pictorial portrait-painter. I remember spending an hour in the late Sir John Millais' studio while the picture of Cardinal Newman, now in the possession of the Duke of

[1] *The Life and Times of Cardinal Wiseman.* By Wilfrid Ward. In two volumes. London. 1897.

Norfolk, was being painted. Millais liked to smoke in silence at his work, and to get some one to talk to his sitter. I was engaged in conversation with the Cardinal upon some topic which specially interested and animated him, when Millais, pipe in hand, suddenly exclaimed, with subdued excitement, "I've got him." So he had. At last, after being often baffled, he had "divinely found the man,"[1] and the Cardinal's face lived upon his canvas. Now, Mr. Wilfrid Ward has certainly "got" Cardinal Wiseman. The testimony of those who knew Wiseman well leaves no doubt about the fidelity and vividness of the portraiture. He has given us, in his two admirable volumes, not merely the great prelate, but the man, with his pompous manner and his shy nature, his grandiose tastes and his childlike heart, his singularly wide culture and his boyish love of fun, his social success and his simple piety, his august achievements and his miserable mistakes. We know his aims; we understand his actions; we are let into the secret of his inner life. And the result is one for which Cardinal Wiseman would undoubtedly have been grateful. "I don't think," he said, when he lay dying, "they will always think me such a monster." By "they" he meant his fellow-countrymen in general. Assuredly, no one can rise from the perusal of Mr. Ward's volumes without feelings of esteem, admiration, and I will say reverence, for the accomplished and devout Churchman, whose righteousness is there made as

[1] Millais told me that Cardinal Newman's likeness was extremely difficult to catch: "There is so much in that face," he said.

clear as the light, and his just dealing as the noonday. We may apply to him, without hyperbole, the beautiful and familiar verses—

> "We know him now: all narrow jealousies
> Are silent; and we see him as he moved:
> How modest, kindly, all accomplished, wise.
> Sweet nature, gilded by the gracious gleam
> Of letters; dear to Science, dear to Art.
> Not making his high place the lawless perch
> Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-ground
> For pleasure; but through all this tract of years
> Wearing the white flower of a blameless life."

Mr. Wilfrid Ward's book, however, is of interest and importance not only as an admirable specimen of the biographer's art, but for another reason. *The Life and Times of Cardinal Wiseman* is the title which he has given it. And the sidelights which it throws upon the momentous period in which the Cardinal's lot was cast, and upon some of the famous personages with whom he was associated, are of great historical value. The Catholic reaction, of which Chateaubriand was the herald, and in some sort the initiator, the condition of the Papal States in the first half of the last century, the growth and issue of the Tractarian Movement, the attitude of Rome to modern thought, are among the topics touched upon and illuminated by him. Again, we may take it—indeed, Mr. Ward, in his Preface, hints as much—that a subsidiary object of his book is to put before the world a juster view of Cardinal Manning than the one exhibited in a famous *Life*, with which most of my readers are probably acquainted. In what I am about to write I shall, in the first place, present some

of the more salient features of Cardinal Wiseman's personality and career, using, for the most part, the materials provided by Mr. Wilfrid Ward. And, by way of epilogue to this, I shall briefly consider what he has to tell us about Cardinal Manning, supplementing it, so far as may seem desirable, from my own knowledge of that most eminent ecclesiastic.

(II)

Cardinal Wiseman was born two years after Cardinal Newman—that is, in 1802. He claimed descent from a Protestant Bishop of Dromore; but his grandfather was a Catholic merchant, who, at the end of the last century, migrated from Waterford to Seville. There Nicholas Wiseman was born, and there he spent the first three years of his life. Thence he was sent to a boarding-school at Waterford to acquire a knowledge of English; and in 1810 he passed to Ushaw College, near Durham. As an infant he had been consecrated to the service of the Church by his mother, who, we are told, laid him upon the high altar of the Cathedral of Seville; and he never doubted of his vocation. Looking back over his career in his last illness, he told a friend: "I have never cared for anything but the Church: my sole delight has been in everything connected with her." He remained at Ushaw for eight years, one of his greatest friends there being George Errington, who was subsequently to become his coadjutor. Dr.

Lingard, who was Vice-President of the College, showed him, as he writes, "many acts of thoughtful and delicate kindness," the foundation of a "correspondence and intimacy" between them in later years, which lasted till the death of that learned historian. As a boy, Nicholas Wiseman was shy and retiring, destitute of all aptitude for athletics, and devoted to books. In 1818 he went to Rome to the restored English College. His life there has been described by Mr. Ward in a passage which it is worth while to quote :—

"The student-life which Wiseman led for the next four years was one of great regularity and of strict discipline. The English College—although less exacting in its regulations than some of the Italian colleges—preserves a measure of Continental severity. The students rose then at half-past five. Half-an-hour's meditation was followed by Mass and breakfast. Every day, except Thursday and Sunday, lectures were attended on philosophy, theology, canon law, Church history, Biblical exegesis, as the case might be ; and the rest of the morning was devoted to study. The midday dinner was preceded by the daily 'examination of conscience.' After dinner came a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and, a little later, the *siesta*. A space in the afternoon was allotted to a walk through the city, either to some object of interest—a church or a museum—or to one of the Palazzos, or to Monte Pincio, where friends would meet the collegians and exchange greetings or converse. Nearly all the colleges—and among them the English—would take their walk *in camerata*—that is to say, the students walking two abreast, in double file. Outside the city or on Monte Pincio this order was relaxed for the time, and students might disperse, reassembling for their return home. The bell towards sunset for the *Ave Maria* would summon the *camerata* back to college, and the rest of

the day was spent chiefly in study and prayer. On Thursday, the weekly holiday, expeditions were often made beyond the city walls to places of interest. The Easter vacation and the long summer holiday were spent at the country house belonging to the college at Monte Porzio, near Tusculum. Here the discipline was somewhat less strict, but was still a life of great regularity, and passed under community rule. The day, both in Rome and at Monte Porzio, was brought to a close with night prayers and the reading of the meditation for the following morning."

It is not easy to overestimate the depth of the impressions left upon Wiseman by the four years passed by him as a student in Rome; by his contact with its relics of the past and its life in the present. "Two influences," writes Mr. Ward, "are especially to be noted—which became intimately blended—that of the historical associations of early Christian history made by the Catacombs, shrines, and museums; and the effect of the frequent sight of the Pope himself. No one can reside in Rome without being affected by both these aspects of the life there; but with Wiseman the impression which they made was the deepest of his life. It was deepened by years of close intimacy with every detail of both aspects, an intimacy represented in later years by the most popular of his books, *Fabiola*, and by the *Recollections of the Last Four Popes*."

In 1824 Wiseman took his degree of Doctor of Divinity, having acquitted himself with much credit in what was called "The Great Public Act." This was the chief feature in the examination, and consisted in maintaining a number of theological propositions

against subtle and trained disputants, in the presence of an audience of prelates and professors. "Among those who came to witness his prowess," Mr. Ward tells us, "were Father Cappellari, afterwards Pope Gregory XVI., then 'a monk clothed in white,' who glided in while the disputation was in full course; and the celebrated French divine, whose writings this same monk later on condemned, Félicité de Lamennais."

Wiseman was not quite twenty-two when his career as a student—his apprenticeship, let me rather say, for he was a student all his days—thus came to a close. And here I should like to insert a portion of a letter of his, written thirty-four years afterwards, in which he reviews this early period of his life. After observing that the method which guided him was to classify leading principles and thoughts, and to refer all he read to a definite aim, he continues—

"I think my powers, such as they were, had been trained and formed and logicized by rude exercises and inward severity which no one saw. Such a course of years!—(oh, my dearest Willy, may you never experience them)—years of solitude, of dereliction, without an encouraging word from Superior or companion, denounced even, more than once, by unseen enemies; years of shattered nerves, dread often of instant insanity, consumptive weakness enfeebled from sinking energy, of sleepless nights and weary days, and hours of tears which no one ever witnessed. For years and years this went on, till a crisis came in my life and character, and I was drawn into a new condition, where all was changed. It was during this period, to me invaluable, that I wrote my *Horæ Syriacæ* (which you probably have scarcely looked into, to see what they cost me), collected my materials for the Lectures on the 'Connexion,' on the Eucharist, etc. Without this training I

should not have thrown myself into the Puseyite controversy at a later period. Yet many of that body, then and since, have told me that I was the only Catholic who understood them, or could throw his mind into theirs. If so, this was only the result of the self-discipline . . . of previous years. The very principle which pervades the Lectures on the Eucharist is the ground of my Oxford Movement papers: that of trying to seize the ideas and feelings of those whose moods you interpret. . . . Some principles and thoughts have been so familiar to my own mind since I was eighteen or twenty, that they appear to me to be universal and commonplace; yet I find, when I have compulsory occasion to utter them, they seem new . . . to others. They are seeds of early planting, which every one should value in himself. There was one consolation through this early time of trial, that the intellectual so thoroughly absorbed the physical, that it made me pass through a passionless youth—I had almost said temptationless. Very early I chose the one object of all my studies, to defend and illustrate religion, Christian and Catholic, and I do not think I have ever swerved in purpose from my aim. Whatever variety of motives may have been attributed to me, I do not think that I have ever been unfaithful to this end."

In 1825 Wiseman was ordained priest. He speaks in his *Recollections* of his happiness at this time, when "freed from the yoke of a repressive discipline and left to follow the bent of his own inclinations [he could] . . . drink long draughts from the fountains which hitherto he could only taste." The next three years were chiefly devoted by him to the preparation of his *Horæ Syriacæ*. The work was published in 1827, and soon gave its author a European reputation. He was immediately nominated by Leo XII. Professor of Oriental Languages at the Roman University, and

Vice Rector of the English College. The next year he became Rector. It was at this time that he laid the foundation of his very considerable reputation as a preacher by a course of English sermons delivered in the church of Gesù e Maria.

Under Wiseman's presidency the English College became a very considerable centre of intellectual life.

"The *Horæ Syriacæ* had, by this time, made him a marked man in the learned world, and visitors to Rome sought him out as a person of distinction. As the chief English preacher in Rome he was turned to for advice and guidance in the not unfrequent cases of the reconciliation of Englishmen to Catholicism, and his new appointment gave him the prominence attaching to the official representative of English Catholics in Rome. Hitherto a shy student, associating little with his neighbours . . . he [now] appears to have mixed freely in society, and to have corresponded with the learned world in various countries. . . . Among the Englishmen who made Wiseman's acquaintance as visitors to Rome during his rectorship, besides Mr. Monckton Milnes, were such men as Archbishop Trench, Julius Hare, Sir Thomas Acland, Charles Marriott, Mr. Gladstone, Lord Macaulay, John Henry Newman, Hurrell Froude, Henry Edward Manning. Some of these visits . . . led to friendships, which were continued on occasion of his visits to England, and brought him into intercourse with cultivated English society outside the Catholic pale, a very unusual position at that time for a 'Romish' ecclesiastic. Visits to the country houses of Archbishop Trench, Monckton Milnes, Lord Spencer, and others are referred to in his letters."

In 1830 there came to the English College, to receive ordination as a priest, the remarkable man subsequently well known as Father Ignatius Spencer.

The brother of the late Lord Spencer, he had been during his early manhood a familiar figure in English society, and had been by no means noted for the strictness of his life. It was in the Opera House in Paris in 1820, as he relates, that he received his first religious impressions. The last scene of *Don Giovanni* appealed to him as a warning of the fate which awaited himself, and led him to a complete reformation of conduct. A little later, he took orders in the Anglican Church, but soon came to entertain doubts of the tenableness of his ecclesiastical position. In 1830 he made his submission to Rome. "He ultimately renounced all his worldly possessions, and devoted his whole time to preaching the Gospel to the poor. He died within a year of Cardinal Wiseman's own death, in 1864, after nearly twenty years spent amid the rigour and austerities of the Passionist order." Father Spencer's dominant thought, after his reception into the Catholic Church, was the conversion of England The devotion and enthusiasm of this holy man deeply influenced Wiseman's impressionable mind. His "simple missionary zeal made him almost suspicious of the more intellectual career upon which the Rector of the College had entered. He told Wiseman, bluntly, that he should apply his mind to something more practical than Syriac MSS. or treatises on geology, and that he would rather see him take up with what suited a priest on the English Mission, as it then was." His admonitions had a great effect on Wiseman, who determined from thenceforth to devote his studies more directly to the cause of the Catholic

revival then in progress throughout Europe, and in particular to labour, as far as in him lay, for the furtherance of "the great cause" in England.

It was in 1833 that Wiseman first saw Newman, who was then visiting Rome in company with Hurrell Froude. Thirteen years afterwards he wrote: "From the day of Newman and Froude's visit to me, I have never, for one instant, wavered in my conviction that a new era had commenced in England. . . . To this great object I devoted myself. The favourite studies of former years were abandoned for the pursuit of this aim alone." Thenceforth, then, Wiseman's mind was steadily set upon more active work for religion among his fellow-countrymen. He thought of founding a Catholic University, of founding a Catholic Review in England, and determined upon paying a reconnoitring visit in the summer of 1835. But before leaving Rome, he delivered the *Lectures on the Connexion between Science and Revealed Religion*, which added so greatly to his reputation. They are, indeed, striking discourses from the thorough and systematic research of which they are manifestly the outcome, from the moderation and candour of their tone, and from their recognition of the great verity so cogently enforced before by Pascal, and since by Newman, that the truest justification of Christianity consists in its giving us "the key to the secrets of our nature, and the solution of all mental problems . . . the answer to all the solemn questions of our restless consciousness." Of course, they are largely out of date, for the science with which they dealt was the science of fifty

years ago: but even at the present time they will well repay perusal.

(III)

Wiseman was now thirty-three years old, and was becoming ever more and more deeply interested in the movement of contemporary European thought, which, as he expressed it, in his rhetorical way, seemed "pawing the ground and struggling to be free from the Pagan trammels which the Reformation cast upon it, and trying once more to fly into the purer Christian ether of Dante and Chaucer." "The exertions of such men as Schlegel, Novalis, Görres, Manzoni, Lamennais, Lamartine, and even the less pure efforts of Victor Hugo or Janin," appeared to him "to show a longing after the revival of Christian principles as the soul and centre of thought and taste and feeling." In this frame of mind he came to England in the autumn of 1835, travelling by Vienna, Munich, Paris, and Bruges, where, as "he saw the Catholic champions, whose writings had so moved him, and received letters in the course of his journey from Syria and China, the world-wide empire of the Roman See was brought before his imaginative mind. And his spirit of hopeful enterprise stood in marked contrast to the ideas of Englishmen, Catholic and Protestant alike, as to the status and work of the Catholics in England—the remnant of the long-proscribed English Papists." To the history of Catholicism in this country during the

two preceding centuries, Mr. Ward devotes a carefully written chapter. Their condition at the time with which we are concerned has been pictured by Cardinal Newman in one of the finest passages which he ever wrote. It is so perfect a bit of English that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of transcribing it, and my readers the pleasure of perusing it:—

"No longer the Catholic Church in the country—nay, no longer, I may say, a Catholic community—but a few adherents of the Old Religion, moving silently and sorrowfully about, as memorials of what had been. 'The Roman Catholics'—not a sect, not even an interest, as men conceived of it—not a body, however small, representative of the Great Communion abroad—but a mere handful of individuals, who might be counted, like the pebbles and *detritus* of the great deluge, and who, forsooth, merely happened to retain a creed which, in its day, indeed, was the profession of a Church. Here a set of poor Irishmen, coming and going at harvest time, or a colony of them lodged in a miserable quarter of the vast metropolis. There, perhaps, an elderly person, seen walking in the streets, grave and solitary, and strange though noble in bearing, and said to be of good family, and a 'Roman Catholic.' An old-fashioned house of gloomy appearance, closed in with high walls, with an iron gate, and yews, and the report attaching to it that 'Roman Catholics' lived there; but who they were, or what they did, or what was meant by calling them Roman Catholics, no one could tell; though it had an unpleasant sound, and told of form and superstition. And then, perhaps, as we went to and fro, looking with a boy's curious eyes through the great city, we might come to-day upon some Moravian chapel, or Quakers' meeting-house, and to-morrow on a chapel of the 'Roman Catholics;' but nothing was to be gathered from it, except that there were lights burning there, and some boys in white, swinging censers; and what it all meant could only be learned from

books, from Protestant Histories and Sermons; and they did not report well of the 'Roman Catholics,' but, on the contrary, deposed that they once had power and had abused it. And then, again, we might, on one occasion, hear it pointedly put out by some literary man, as the result of his careful investigation, and as a recondite point of information, which few knew, that there was this difference between the Roman Catholics of England and the Roman Catholics of Ireland, that the latter had bishops, and the former were governed by four officials, called Vicars-Apostolic. Such was about the sort of knowledge possessed of Christianity by the heathen of old time, who persecuted its adherents from the face of the earth, and then called them *gens lucifuga*, a people who shunned the light of day. Such were Catholics in England, found in corners, and alleys, and cellars, and the housetops, or in the recesses of the country; cut off from the populous world around them, and dimly seen, as if through a mist or in twilight, as ghosts flitting to and fro, by the high Protestants, the lords of the earth."

To these Wiseman came in 1835, the representative of glorious historical traditions of their own which had become to them "only a fading verbal memory," and of an ecumenical cause the identity of which with their own they hardly realized. He came "not an unknown man, who had to win respect from bitterly prejudiced fellow-countrymen, but a scholar of European distinction, the host and the friend of many an Englishman who had been glad of an English welcome in Rome, and were ready to return his hospitality."

Wiseman's reconnoitring visit lasted for a year, and was pregnant with the results of great moment. An accident brought him somewhat prominently before the general public. The Abbate Baldaconni,

the priest of the Sardinian Chapel in Lincoln's Inn Fields, was anxious to pay a visit to Italy. Wiseman, who spoke Italian as fluently as English, consented to take his duty, and in Advent 1836 tried the experiment of some Lectures addressed to Catholics and Protestants alike. They had an extraordinary success; a success so great as to alarm the pious lecturer. "I used to shed tears," he told Cardinal Vaughan long after, "in the sacristy of the Sardinian Chapel, fearing that whatever good the lectures were doing to others, they were filling me with vain-glory." The chapel was crowded, every seat being occupied half an hour before Compline, and although the discourses lasted for an hour and a half, or longer, the attention of the congregation seems never to have flagged. Wiseman was then staying in Lincoln's Inn Fields, in the house of Mr. Bagshawe, father of the late Judge Bagshawe, who relates, "He was besieged at all hours of the day by those who heard the lectures and wished to consult the lecturer." In the following Lent he lectured in Moorfields Church at the request of Bishop Bramston, the Vicar-Apostolic of the London District, and "the second venture was even more successful."

"Society in this country," writes the late Mr. George White, "was impressed, and listened almost against its will, and listened not displeased. Here was a young Roman priest, fresh from the centre of Catholicism, who showed himself master, not only of the intricacies of polemical discussion, but of the amenities of civilized life. Protestants were equally astonished and gratified to find that acuteness and urbanity were not incompatible even in controversial argument. The spacious church of Moorfields was thronged

on every evening of Dr. Wiseman's appearance; . . . many persons of position and education were converted, and all departed with abated prejudice, and with very different notions about Catholicism from those with which they had been prepossessed by their education. 'No controversial lectures delivered within our memory,' says another contemporary writer, 'ever excited public interest to such a degree.' 'I had the consolation,' writes Wiseman himself, 'of witnessing the patient and edifying attention of a crowded audience, many of whom stood for over two hours, without any symptom of impatience.' Among the most constant listeners was Lord Brougham."

A curious token of the abatement of anti-Catholic prejudice, brought about by Wiseman's Lectures, is supplied by the fact that in 1836 he was invited to write an article on the Catholic Church for *The Penny Cyclopædia*. In the same year he joined O'Connell and Quinn in founding the *Dublin Review*, stipulating that "no extreme political views should be introduced into it." In the autumn of 1836 he returned to Rome, and was at his post in the English College for the commencement of the term in October. But he never again entirely settled down into his old habits. His heart was, thenceforth, in great measure in England.

(IV)

To England he came again in the summer of 1839. And this visit resulted in his permanent residence here. That was his own wish, and the wish of the English ecclesiastical authorities; and the Pope concurred in

it. The aged Bishop Walsh, Vicar-Apostolic of the Central District, needed a coadjutor. Wiseman was nominated to the office, and was at the same time appointed President of Oscott. On June 8, 1840, he received episcopal consecration from the hands of Cardinal Fransoni, in the chapel of the English College. It was a sore trial to him to leave the city where he had dwelt for twenty-two years, until, as he expressed it, "affection clung to every old stone there like the moss which grew to it." Writing in 1857, he applied to himself the touching lines of Ovid's *Tristia*:—

> "Quum subit illius tristissima noctis imago
> Quæ mihi supremum tempus in Urbe fuit,
> Quum repeto noctem qua tot mihi cara reliqui
> Labitur ex oculis nunc quoque gutta meis."

But he had a strong feeling that his duty called him to labour here. On arriving in England he writes: "I saluted the land dear to me by holy love. Behold, the vineyard of the Lord! Welcome, labour and persecution, reproach and scorn. Bless, O Lord, my entry into the land of my desires." On September 16, 1840, he arrived at Oscott, and took up his residence there as its President.

The Oxford Movement was now in full progress, and largely engaged Wiseman's thoughts. It is not too much to say that the fate of that Movement was determined by his famous essay on "St. Augustine and the Donatists," published in the *Dublin Review* of July, 1839. Newman has described in the *Apologia* the impression it produced upon him. "The first real hit from Romanism," he says. It emphasized with a

force, all the greater from the urbanity and moderation of the language in which it was couched, the principle deemed by St. Augustine essential to the idea of the Church as the one organized spiritual society claiming to expound with authority the Christian revelation. But I will give Mr. Ward's admirable summary:—

"He pointed out that the question of a Church in a state of schism was regarded by the Fathers not as a question of antiquarian research, but as a great practical case of conscience for each individual. The facts on which the technical controversy depended might become obscured; but this did not leave individual persons or individual Churches free to say, 'I see no convincing proof on either side; therefore I will do as I like.' Such a plea had been advanced in the fifth century; and the very Fathers to whom Newman was appealing as his mainstay had emphatically disallowed it. Briefly, St. Augustine had shown that in a matter so vital to the continued existence of the Church as an organic society, a simple and incontrovertible guiding principle was needed for individual persons and Churches—a principle capable of being applied by the unlearned as well as by the learned. Cases were constantly arising, and would arise, of schism on the part of a local or national Church. Each party—the schismatics and their opponents—would profess to represent the ancient Catholic faith, and would call itself Catholic. If the individual Church or the individual member of the Church were to be allowed to judge for itself or himself, all hope of Catholic unity would be gone. The local Church must, therefore, in the nature of the case, be amenable to the judgment of its peers. If the rest of the Catholic Church acknowledged the bishop of a local Church, and interchanged letters of communion with him, then he and those who were his spiritual subjects formed part of the Church Catholic. If the rest of the Church refused to communicate with him, and judged his claim to be invalid, then he was thereby ruled to be in schism. This simple but

pregnant rule was essential to the very existence of the Church Catholic; and St. Augustine sums it up in the sentence which was destined to ring in Newman's ears for many a day: 'Quapropter securus judicat orbis terrarum, in quacumque parte orbis terrarum.'"

We all know the effect of this "Securus judicat orbis terrarum" upon Newman. That very summer he for the first time realized—as he told Henry Wilberforce—that possibly it might prove a duty to join the Church of Rome. This famous article was one of a series devoted to successive phases of the Oxford Movement. The general effect of them was fairly summed up by Mr. W. G. Ward in a letter written twenty years afterwards: "There can be no doubt whatever, in my judgment, that without such a view of the Catholic Church and her position as we obtained from the *Dublin*, we, Oxford people, should have had our conversion indefinitely retarded, even had we, at last, been converted at all."

I shall deal with the progress and issue of the Oxford Movement in a subsequent Study. But I should notice that some of the main lines of thought in the *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, which we may regard as the last cry of Newman's expiring Anglicanism, had been anticipated by Wiseman in a remarkable sermon preached at Derby in 1839. It may be said of Wiseman, as of Newman himself, that when at the call of duty he engaged in religious controversy he at once lifted it to a higher level than that usually occupied by disputants on divinity. In neither of them was there any trace of the *odium theologicum*.

Both employed their arguments not to wound nor to baffle, but to persuade and win. But while watching the Tractarian Party with the keenest interest, and with a hopefulness only partially justified by the event, Wiseman was endeavouring to breathe a new life into the dry bones of English Catholicism; to clothe them, so to speak, with flesh and blood; to deck them with the beauty and grace of renascent vigour. On this subject let us hear Mr. Ward—

"The new President had of necessity to play the part of controversialist and diplomatist, in dealing with the development of the Oxford Movement; but it was a much more unmixed pleasure to him to aim at bringing to perfection the devotional rites in Oscott Chapel. The poetry and symbolism of the Catholic liturgy were, according to the testimony of all his friends, the subject of his greatest interest and enthusiasm. He had learned to love the liturgy in its wonderful presentation at the Sixtine Chapel; and he endeavoured, as far as might be, in this as in other things, to bring Rome to England. He was fully alive to the transitory nature of the theological controversy of the hour—to its reference to a passing state of opinion. He foresaw that a few years later the crucial controversy would not be about the Thirty-nine Articles, but about all belief in the supernatural world. 'Fifty years hence,' he said one day to the Divines in the middle of a theological lecture, 'the professors of this place will be endeavouring to prove, not transubstantiation, but the existence of God.' Controversy was in its nature ephemeral —as well as distasteful to his genial and kindly nature. But the Church liturgy was a part of that life of the Church which was more near to the source of its strength than any phase of dialectics. The deep feelings and beliefs of the early Christians, the poetry of their faith and its intense reality, had embodied themselves in the liturgy which was handed

down. Here we have the living imaginative pictures which had inspired Christians before the medieval dialectics were known to them, which should inspire with the same spirit the Christians of our own time, and which would outlive our own disputes as they have outlived those of Abelard and those of Luther. The meditations they aroused were the permanent and unchanging heritage of the Church, never to pass away; while each intellectual phase was in its nature only transient."

(V)

In the spring of 1847 the question of the restoration of the Catholic Hierarchy in England had been mooted by the English Bishops at their Annual Meeting, and Wiseman had been deputed to go to Rome and submit their views to the Holy See. The year before Pius IX. had been elected to the Apostolic Throne, and had been welcomed "with tumult of acclaim" as the leader of the national movement in Italy. Unquestionably he sympathized warmly with that movement, and hoped to guide and restrain it within the limits of Christianity and Catholicism. He began his reign by a complete abandonment of the repressive policy relied upon by his immediate predecessors for the maintenance of their Civil Princedom, undermined by the insurrections and conspiracies which had become chronic in the States of the Church. An almost general amnesty was granted to political offenders. A constitution founded on the old institutions which the French invasion of 1798 had shattered, a much-needed reform of civil and criminal law, the

concession of a rational freedom of the press, the creation of a Roman Municipal Council and National Guard, were among the wise and liberal measures which marked the beginning of the new Pontificate. They secured for Pius IX. an unbounded popularity throughout Europe. In England he was generally described as the most enlightened Sovereign of the age. And to England he specially looked for "diplomatic support and avowed encouragement." This was reasonable enough, since these measures were precisely such as the English Government had suggested in language even more emphatic than that employed by the other Great Powers who also recommended them, in 1831, after the insurrection of the Legations had been put down. And Wiseman was sent back to England to communicate the Pontiff's views to Lord Palmerston, then Foreign Secretary. The extremely interesting Memorandum which he drew up on this occasion for Palmerston's information, is given in full by Mr. Ward. The result was that Lord Minto was despatched by the British Government to Rome, "not as a Minister accredited to the Pope, but as the authentic organ of the British Government, enabled to declare its views and explain its sentiments." As a matter of fact, Lord Minto's presence in Rome served chiefly to encourage the extreme Liberal Party against which Pius IX. sought protection, and which was determined to force him into war with Austria. I need not recount the story of the Roman Revolution of 1848: how the Pope made concession after concession in the vain hope of

satisfying popular demands: how Rosmini came to Rome as the Envoy of the Sardinian King, and drafted a scheme for an Italian Federation under Papal presidency: how Rossi—surely one of the most pathetic figures in the history of the century—was brutally assassinated: how Pius IX., threatened with a like fate, fled to Gaeta, declining, in his humility and self-abnegation, one of the most magnificent prospects of martyrdom ever offered to the sons of men. But during that troubled and disastrous time, the project for the restoration of the English Hierarchy was being carefully matured by the Congregation of Propaganda with the assistance of Bishop Ullathorne, representing the English Vicars-Apostolic. And when that prelate left Rome in August, 1848, the scheme was practically decided on.

In the spring of 1849, Wiseman was appointed Vicar-Apostolic of the London district, which he had administered since the death of Bishop Walsh in August, 1847. His task there was, from the first, by no means an easy one. Many, probably most, of the born Catholics among his clergy were opposed to what was called "the Romanizing and innovating ways" of some of the converts—ways with which Wiseman, educated in foreign traditions, largely sympathized. One of the most arduous tasks which lay before him was the fusion of the old and new elements in English Catholicism. But this he did not then know. In the spring of 1850 he was led to believe that his work in England was soon to be ended. A communication reached him at that time notifying the Pope's intention

to call him to the Sacred College. And this, as he supposed, meant that for the future he must reside in Rome. Much as he appreciated the honour, he would fain have declined it. For it was the death-blow to his cherished wish to labour for England in England. He wrote to Rome to beg that he might be excused. But a peremptory answer came that he was wanted there, and that his successor would be appointed. The thought that he would return to London as Cardinal-Archbishop never entered his mind, we are assured by Dr. Whitty, then his Vicar-General. But it entered the minds of many of the leading laity, and strong representations were accordingly made to the Vatican. The result was that when the Pope's Brief re-establishing the Hierarchy was issued in September, 1850, Wiseman, who just before had been created a Cardinal, was appointed to the see of Westminster.

(VI)

It cannot be denied that his first official act exhibited that curious want of judgment which from time to time marred his career. Wisdom after the event is proverbially easy. But even then clear-headed men among Catholics were dismayed by that wonderful Pastoral "From without the Flaminian Gate." Dr. Whitty, his Vicar-General, stood aghast at its inflated rhetoric, and was greatly perplexed whether or no to publish it. But he felt that he could not withhold it without a clear obligation

of duty. A very valued and very intimate friend of Newman told me: "I was in church on the following Sunday, when Newman read the Pastoral. His face was a study—especially when he came to the 'From without the Flaminian Gate' at the end." I need not dwell upon the "Papal Aggression" outcry, or the abortive Ecclesiastical Titles Act in which it issued. I may, however, note that Cardinal Wiseman's masterly *Appeal to the English People* —a considerable portion of which Mr. Ward prints— had no small influence in quieting the agitation. Temperate and logical—curious contrast to the Flaminian Pastoral—it was acknowledged by nearly the whole press to be in the highest degree worthy of the author's reputation and position. "There can be no doubt at all," wrote the *Spectator*, "of his controversial power. Whether confuting the Premier on grounds of political precedent, meeting ecclesiastical opponents by appeals to principles of spiritual freedom, rebuking a partisan judge, or throwing sarcasm at the 'indiffusive wealth of a sacred establishment which has become literally hedged from the world by barriers of social depravity,' he equally shows his mastery of dialectical resource."

Cardinal Wiseman ruled the diocese of Westminster as its Archbishop, and the Catholic Church in England as its Metropolitan, for fourteen years. I must refer my readers to an admirably written chapter in Mr. Ward's second volume for most interesting personal traits about him; his sympathetic kindness to his clergy, his aversion from the business

routine of public life, the breadth and variety of his interests, his jocose intercourse with his intimates, his fondness for children, his love of elegant literary trifling, his endeavours worthily to sustain the dignity of his position—exemplified, for example, in his keeping the table of a Roman Cardinal, and a chariot with gorgeous trappings such as members of the Sacred College then used in Rome. I am here rather concerned to note that his work during those fourteen years was to live down the prejudice excited, by the events of 1850–51, against him and the cause he represented : and to build up the Catholic Church in England. That work he successfully accomplished. It is curious to observe how soon he regained his popularity with the general public. A striking evidence of this is afforded by the invitations to lecture on subjects of general interest which reached him from all sides—invitations with which he gladly complied so far as he could. One of them came from the Royal Institution. He was, I believe, the first Catholic to whom that compliment was paid. It was in 1854 that he published his historical romance, *Fabiola :* "a good book, which had all the success of a bad one," the Archbishop of Milan wittily said. It was speedily translated into almost all European languages, and new editions of it are still appearing in England and on the Continent.

"The great variety of his pursuits," writes Mr. Ward, "might seem at first sight suggestive of the *dilettante.* Over and above his professional duties, we have seen him occupied with Oriental studies, with art, with literature, with the

Tractarian Movement, at one time on a diplomatic mission on behalf of the Liberal Pope, at another lecturing to a London audience on the Crimean War; then again busy with practical reforms among the poor, and soon afterwards offering suggestions as to the hanging of a National Portrait Gallery. Yet his intimate friends are unanimous as to the unity of his work and purpose. The key to the explanation of this apparent contradiction is, I think, found in a saying of his friend, Father Whitty, in a letter to Henry Edward Manning, written just after Wiseman's death. The cause of Wiseman's influence did not lie, Father Whitty said, only in his talents and acquirements, considerable as they were, but in his being, in his tastes, in his policy and work, and in his writings, a faithful representative of the Catholic Church—*not*, he adds, as a Saint represents her, solely on the ethical side, but as a national poet represents the all-round genius of a particular country in his various poems. Hence, in the first place, the character of his influence even among his own co-religionists in England. He found them a persecuted sect, he left them a Church. He found them in 1835 the remnant of a proscribed section of Englishmen, longing only to live and let live, who had lost the old devotional ideas, to whom many characteristic features in the training of the priesthood, in the symbolical ceremonial of the Church, in the monastic life, were almost unknown; who had little appreciation of religious art or religious architecture. He brought to them bodily, from Roman life, the poetry and varied activity of the Church, together with its Hierarchy and organization. But further, he pointed out, in the inaugural lecture at the opening of his Academia, in 1861, his conception of the Church in its relations with the world: and this had a bearing on a wider public. While he resolutely maintained that, whether triumphant or depressed, in the Lateran Basilica or in the Catacombs, the Church has the great ethical ideals of the Gospel to teach, that these have been securely preserved only where the primitive traditions and doctrines have been jealously guarded and handed down, and that if the world

despises these ideals so much the worse for the world; while he insisted that the Saints were the witnesses to the possibility and the value of the highest life; while in this sphere he maintained that whether men of intellect laughed with Voltaire or bent in reverence with Pascal, the Church was a teacher,—he was equally emphatic that in the spheres of science and art, and secular civilization, Catholics should be largely learners, and adapt themselves to the genius of the age or country in which their lot is cast. The Church cannot expect to be the source of the varied energy of the community; all she can do is to turn its direction towards those high ideals of which she is the guardian, or in a direction which bodes them no harm. This, I think, gives the true meaning of Wiseman's very various fields of interest. He strove, partly unconsciously, to realize his ideal of the Church in contact with human activity."

It is unpleasant to remember that Cardinal Wiseman's last days of failing health and vigour were embittered by those of his own household of faith from whom he most confidently expected help and sympathy. The year 1856 saw the beginning of the difficulty with the *Rambler*, of which a full and, so far as I can judge, a fair account will be found in Mr. Ward's pages. The year before, Bishop Errington of Plymouth was appointed by the Pope, at Wiseman's desire, to be his coadjutor with right of succession, and was nominated to the titular Archbishopric of Trebizond. The year after, the Pontiff named Dr. Manning Provost of the Westminster Chapter. Manning had been received in 1851, and had since then resided much in Rome, where Pius IX. had taken a great fancy to him. As Provost of Westminster he acquired a commanding influence

over the moribund Cardinal, much to the dissatisfaction of Archbishop Errington, who, in common with hereditary Catholics generally, regard the convert clergyman with great distrust. They viewed, also, with much dislike the Congregation of the Oblates which he had founded in Bayswater with himself as Rector, and to which, as was supposed, the direction of the Diocesan Seminary was to be entrusted. On this subject Mr. Ward has an admirably candid page, which I shall quote :—

"When, therefore, they found the Rector of the new Congregation—a convert, unacquainted with traditionary English Catholic ways—indulging in superciliousness, as they thought, in his attitude towards the sterling qualities of his fellow-priests and encouraging his young followers to 'pose' as models of a new spirit in the priesthood, and to preach the spirit of obedience to the very college superiors whom they ought to have obeyed and not criticized ; when at the same time it was evident that the abilities of this 'convert parson' had secured for him an ever-growing influence with the Cardinal ; when he was placed by the Pope over the Chapter as its Provost ; when the Cardinal's action in critical matters was found to be in harmony with the Provost's views, and he gave especial exemptions to the Oblates themselves and treated them (it was thought) as favourites, a number of deep feelings and prejudices in human nature were aroused. The kind of 'caste feeling' which made the old Catholic mistrust the 'convert' came to the front. Manning's reserved nature and ungenial demeanour encouraged it. His ceaseless activity, his wide schemes, were unintelligible to men whose traditions were those of a persecuted minority which had courted only tolerance and obscurity. His pertinacity became in their eyes intriguing ; his activity and enterprise *pro Deo et Ecclesia* were ambition ;

his motives were outside the sphere which such men could understand or believe in. He was constantly seen going to the Cardinal at York Place or at Leyton. The ordinary hours for audience were set aside for the Provost, who was admitted at all times. Old friends, like Errington and Searle, found it useless to say a word in opposition to the views of this new-comer. He had 'got round' the Cardinal, and loyalty to Wiseman, as well as the welfare of the diocese, called upon them to open the Cardinal's eyes, and, if possible, to curb the ever-growing power of the Provost."

The Errington drama, as Mr. Ward calls it, dragged its slow length along until July, 1860, when Pius IX., failing to persuade the coadjutor to resign, by an exercise of Apostolic authority, without precedent, as I understand, deprived him of his coadjutorship and right of succession.

This did not augment Dr. Manning's popularity among the clergy of Westminster. But it ratified and increased his influence over Cardinal Wiseman, who, in ever-failing health—"sick at heart and in body" is his own description of himself—was painfully estranged from his Chapter, the great bulk of his clergy, and most of his brother Bishops. And now the Roman Question came to the front, and became, indeed, the question of the day among Catholics. In 1860 all that remained to the Pope of the States of the Church was the City of Rome, with the Provinces of Frosinone and Velletri. And this attenuated sovereignty was felt to be very precarious. Men's minds were failing them for fear throughout the Catholic Church. They did not see how the Papacy could do without the Temporal Power which it had so

long possessed. This feeling was strong in England. Wiseman, of course, fully sympathized with it. But he was of pacific temperament and in feeble health. Manning, on the other hand, was of militant disposition and full of vigour. He threw himself with ardour into that extreme Papalism of which Louis Veuillot was the chief apostle in France, and which in England found its most considerable exponent in Mr. W. G. Ward. "To Wiseman, to be a party man was to act contrary to the genius of the Church." But Manning was by nature a party man. And his sympathies were openly and unreservedly given to a certain section of Catholics who seemed desirous to convert Catholicism into what Montalembert called "Grand Llamism." The adulatory addresses which used to go up to Pius IX. from devotees all over the world, fill one with amazement when one reads them at this distance of time, and applies to that Pontiff the laws of historical perspective.[1] Sir Epicurus Mammon, in Jonson's *Alchemist*, anticipates among other advantages which will accrue to the possessor of the Philosopher's Stone, this: that his "flatterers shall be the purest and gravest of divines." That doubtful benefit Pius IX. enjoyed for many years. It was, of course, an exaggeration of the chivalrous devotion to him engendered by his personal amiability—"one whom to see is to love," Cardinal Newman truly said—and by the greatness of his reverses. "The Temporal Power,"

[1] Mr. Ward notes that the conductors of the *Univers* and its successor, the *Monde*, expressed devotion to the Pope in language which some of the French Bishops stigmatized as idolatrous.—Vol. ii. p. 418.

however, became a sort of shibboleth. And the eyes of surprise and indignation were turned upon Catholics who declined to pronounce it in season and out of season. It was the habit of Mr. W. G. Ward to designate those of the household of faith who did not adopt all his extravagances and absurdities on this subject "half-tinkered Catholics." I have heard him apply this phrase to Newman, among other distinguished persons. And I remember how, years afterwards, he felt Newman's elevation to the Cardinalate as a sort of personal wrong. An excellent ecclesiastic, much in his confidence, sought to console him by remarking, "Well, Mr. Ward, Pius IX. would never have made him a Cardinal." "Pius IX. have made him a Cardinal!" Ward exploded: "Pius IX. would have seen him damned first." Mr. Wilfrid Ward tells us that the object of the prohibition of the English Universities to Catholic young men, and the consequent sacrifice of the higher education of generations, was that they might be "sound on the question of the Temporal Power." Well, I will take leave to say that the sacrifice was made in vain. So far as my experience goes—and it goes fairly far—I find usually in Catholics whose minds have been expanded and disciplined by the training of Oxford or Cambridge, a rational appreciation of the importance of that grave question: a real apprehension of the truth succinctly formulated by Cardinal Newman, that "the autonomy of the Pope is a first principle in European politics." And it is, as a rule, Catholics lacking such mental expansion and discipline, who are lukewarm about the

question, and to whom Pontifical assertions of the necessity of "an effective civil sovereignty" for the peaceful exercise of the Supreme Pastorate signify nothing.

It is not easy to overrate the loss which the world has suffered by the divorce of the cause of freedom from the cause of faith through the events of 1848–9. The Pope, restored to his Civil Princedom by French troops, was thrown into the hands of reactionaries, who, in the name of piety, fought against progress, and sought to gainsay the world's great law of movement. The Liberal party in Italy, on the other hand, became avowedly anti-Christian. Its mountebank hero, Garibaldi, in a published letter to which Wiseman opportunely called the attention of the British public, just then on their knees before that vulgar idol, extolled the French Revolutionists of 1793 for giving to the world the Goddess of Reason, and reproached their descendants for abandoning her obscene cult. It must be owned that the *Syllabus of Errors* in which Pius IX., "addressing the Catholic world in great earnestness and charity" (to use Cardinal Newman's words), provided mankind with an Index raisonné to his Encyclical and Allocutional "proscriptions," produced an effect quite other than what the Pope had contemplated. He may be said, indeed, to have played into the hands of his enemies in issuing it. For whatever the theological value and merit of the document may be[1]—a subject which I am incompetent to discuss, as I am not a theologian—I feel sure that no candid historian can regard it as happy in the

[1] Cardinal Newman's view on this question will be found at p. 261.

opportunity of its publication. It supplied the anti-Christian party with a colourable pretext for asserting "the definite divorce of the Church from the modern world," the irreconcilable hostility of Catholicism to the civilization and progress of the nineteenth century. Mr. Wilfrid Ward correctly notes that Pius IX., who, in 1848, was hailed by English public opinion as "the most enlightened sovereign in Europe," was considered, ten years afterwards, "the most benighted." All this was extremely bitter to Wiseman, as utterly opposed to his most cherished ideal. His conception—and Cardinal Newman's also—was, to quote Mr. Ward's words, that "the Church was to do its work by turning in a right direction all the energies of modern civilization and adopting its institutions." His last years were spent in "a world not moving to his mind." His work was done. He felt it to be so. It was on the 15th of March, 1865, that his release came. His funeral was the occasion of a display of sympathetic popular interest, not exhibited, as his old opponent the *Times* newspaper declared, since the State funeral of the Duke of Wellington.

(VII)

Such in brief outline was Cardinal Wiseman as presented to us in Mr. Wilfrid Ward's admirably written pages. There too, as I intimated in beginning this paper, will be found much to rectify the picture presented of Cardinal Manning in the too-famous *Life* with which we are all acquainted. Perhaps

the most unpleasant portion of that work is the account given of the affair of Dr. Errington. Mr. Ward conclusively shows, by reference to original documents, that this account is extremely inaccurate. He claims, further—and it appears to me with reason—that Manning's action throughout that affair was simply self-defensive; that there is no ground for ascribing Archbishop Errington's deposition to "Manning's skill and audacity." He admits, however, as "possible enough," that "Manning's iron will did materially help to keep Cardinal Wiseman firm in carrying through the contest." That seems to me more than "possible enough." It seems quite certain. As to the charge of "unscrupulous methods of attack" which is brought against Cardinal Manning by his biographer, Mr. Ward desiderates "knowledge of the facts on which it rests." I suppose the truth is that Manning, in his diplomatic proceedings at Rome, was obliged to make use of such instruments as he found. Conspicuous among them was Mgr. George Talbot, for whose astounding letters the best excuse may perhaps be found in the conjecture that they were written in the early stage of that mental malady to which he eventually succumbed.

And now, one word more about Cardinal Manning. It must be remembered that he was essentially an ecclesiastical statesman. He was not, in the full sense of the word, a scholar. Doubtless he profited vastly by that Oxford training from which—curiously enough—he, for so many years, debarred others. But the late Bishop Milman, of Calcutta, who knew him well,

appears warranted in describing him as "entirely deficient in accuracy and real knowledge." Of this, indeed, he himself was well aware. In 1845 he wrote, "Every day makes me feel more the want of deep and thorough study in early life." That want the engrossing occupation of maturer years never allowed him to supply. Nor was he, properly speaking, a man of letters. Some years ago I was led, for a particular purpose, to read every line he had ever written. Probably I am the only man living who has accomplished that task, and it is difficult to believe that any man could engage upon it save at the categorical bidding of a sense of duty. I cannot call to mind a single page of his likely to live as literature. The title of theologian assuredly cannot be given to him. Indeed, there are very few ecclesiastics to whom it can be given. Theology in the Catholic Church—and I suppose in the Catholic Church alone—is arduously and profoundly studied as a *science*. Manning never so studied it. The nickname of Mgr. Ignorante, bestowed upon him in Rome, where his great favour with Pius IX. aroused much jealousy, expressed the disdain generally felt for his attainments in divinity. His attainments in philosophy were not more considerable, although he was fond of talking about it, and was, I believe, a regular attendant at the meetings of that singular Metaphysical Society, the members of which, with very few exceptions, possessed not the slightest tincture of metaphysics. His great tact, unfailing readiness, supreme confidence in himself, and singular dignity of manner, invested his

utterances on such topics as were there debated with a certain speciousness. But his great friend and admirer, Mr. W. G. Ward, a very competent judge, used to describe them as "impressive nothings." I remember one occasion on which I fully expected to see him cornered. It was at the house of the editor of one of our leading Magazines, where a small number of persons, supposed to be representative of various schools of thought, were gathered together for friendly colloquy. Among these were Cardinal Manning, Dr. Fairbairn, and myself. Dr. Fairbairn was discussing a somewhat difficult metaphysical point, with copious references to recent Teutonic speculation, and was especially addressing himself to the Cardinal, who, entirely ignorant of German, could not, as I felt sure, so much as understand the terminology which was employed. He ended by saying, "What does your Eminence think?" I was in a state of expectant wonder as to how the Cardinal would get out of it, when, to my dismay, he turned to me, remarking: "Mr. Lilly's studies in these matters have been more recent than mine; perhaps he will kindly tell us what he thinks." This was turning the tables on me with a vengeance, as I had been merely considering what the Cardinal could possibly say to Dr. Fairbairn's argument, and had been by no means weighing it. I replied as best I could, on the spur of the moment; but I fear that what I said must have been little satisfactory to that profound and widely read metaphysician: a nothing, and not impressive. It was I, not the Cardinal, who was cornered.

Cardinal Manning, then, was, before and beyond all things, an ecclesiastical statesman—and an ecclesiastical statesman of a high order: a Churchman cast in the heroic mould of St. Gregory VII. And William of Malmesbury's description of the Pontiff applies equally well to the Cardinal: "Vir apud Deum felicis gratiæ et apud homines austeritatis fortassis nimiæ." He was essentially a man of action; and it was in matters of ecclesiastical polity that his great gifts found their proper sphere: his imperious will, his clear intellect, his strong purpose. The principle of authority had very early commended itself to him as all-sufficient in religion. And in the Communion of Rome he found the true home of that principle. For him *Roma locuta est* was an all-sufficient formula. "The Church asserts," "the Church condemns," was enough. Into the reasons, limits, and qualifications, whether of her assertion or condemnation, he did not care to inquire. His words to Hope Scott, upon the eve of quitting the Anglican Communion, are very significant: "It is either Rome or licence of thought and will." That acute and bitter writer, known as Pomponio Leto, said of him: "Manning is enamoured of the principle of authority as the slave adores the principle of liberty." And he expected and exacted from others the blind obedience which he was himself accustomed to give. As a ruler, he was severe and exact. But—this should never be forgotten—there were in his nature springs of deep compassion and true tenderness towards the weak and the erring. The twenty thousand neglected Catholic

children of London were very near his heart from the first moment of his episcopate. And before it came to an end he had succeeded, after many a hard fight with bigotry and ignorance, in securing their education in Catholic schools. For the brutal gratifications of notoriety and money he cared absolutely nothing. But he was a born ruler of men; and he loved to rule. At Harrow he was known as "the General," from his habit of command. Even there, "Aut Cæsar, aut nullus" was his motto. Well, he became Cæsar—a ruler in the midst, even among his brethren. And his rule was everywhere felt. He sought to control even the smallest details. A witty man, who knew him well, said of him: "He is not content to drive the coach; he wants to drag it also." It was not an uncommon experience—*experto crede*—if one went to ask his sanction for some plan, to receive for answer, "Yes, I thank you; it would be an excellent thing—*I'll do it:*" which was not exactly the answer one wanted. And, as a rule, he did not do it. How could he? His hands were too full. He had the defects of his qualities—his great qualities. But I do not understand how any one who had the privilege of intercourse with him could doubt his faith unfeigned, his deep devotion, his spotless integrity, his indomitable courage, his singleness of aim, his entire dedication of himself to the cause which he, in his inmost soul, believed to be the only cause worth living for. "The purity of his heart, the sanctity of his motives, no man knowing him can question," Archdeacon Hare bore witness when lamenting his secession. This testimony is true.

VII

THE MEANING OF TRACTARIANISM

(I)

I PROPOSE to inquire what Tractarianism was in itself, and what is its significance for us. The time has perhaps now come when this can be done without exciting those polemical passions which the bare mention of Tractarianism was once sure to arouse. The Tractarian Movement has become matter of history: and, like all great moral, intellectual, and spiritual movements, it is most accurately and most fruitfully studied in the person and action of its leader. Nor can there be any doubt who its real leader was. The judgment of our own day is in accord with the judgment of Cardinal Newman's contemporaries, in regarding him as its originator, so far as its origin can be referred to any one man; in fastening upon him the main responsibility for all that has come out of it. I shall have to touch upon this point again. For the moment it will be sufficient to observe, that, in what I am about to write regarding the true character and more notable results of the Tractarian Movement, I shall seek my main

documents in Cardinal Newman's works. Now, one special note of those works which renders them of the utmost value for my present purpose is their strong individuality. They are all instinct with that egotism which, to use a happy expression of their author, is, in some cases, the truest modesty. Each in its different way, and in its varying degree, has for us its revelation about him. Thus the *Grammar of Assent* does for us objectively what the *Apologia* does subjectively. The *Essay on Development* is confessedly a chapter—the last—in the workings of the author's mind which issued in his submission to Rome. There is perhaps not one of his *Oxford Sermons* which, as he has told us of the famous discourse on Wisdom and Innocence, was not written with a secret reference to himself. His verses are the expression of personal feelings, the greater part of them, to give his own account, growing out of that religious movement which he followed so faithfully from first to last.[1] And, further, we have his later criticism of his former self, his ultimate judgments upon his early views, in the prefaces and notes with which he has enriched the new editions of his old works. Thus we possess in his volumes not only the story of his life, but, in some degree, his comment thereon.

> "Ille velut fidis arcana sodalibus olim
> Credebat libris, neque si male cesserat unquam
> Decurrens alio, neque si bene, quo fit ut omnis
> Votiva pateat veluti descripta tabella
> Vita senis."

[1] Dedication to Mr. Badeley of *Verses upon Various Occasions*, p. vii.

(II)

Cardinal Newman's life ran with the last century. It is to the age of Pitt and Fox, of Napoleon and Pius VII., of Scott and Byron, of Coleridge and Kant, that we must go back to survey the moral, political, and religious surroundings of his early years. It is worth while to go back to these surroundings. To form some apprehension of the spiritual element in which he lived and moved during the time when his character was matured and his first principles were formed, is a necessary condition precedent to any true understanding of what he was and of what he wrought. Let us therefore glance at the condition of English religious thought at that period.

Perhaps it is not too much to say that never, during its course of well-nigh two thousand years in the world, did Christianity so widely lose the character of a spiritual religion as during the last half of the eighteenth century. Not in England only, but in all Protestant countries, the general aim of its accredited teachers seems to have been to explain away its mysteries, to extenuate its supernatural character, to reduce it to a system of ethics little differing from the doctrines of Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius. Religious dogmas were almost openly admitted to be nonsense. Religious emotion was openly stigmatized as enthusiasm. Theology, from being "the science of things divine," had sunk into

apologies opposing, too often, weak answers to strong objections, and into evidences endeavouring, for the most part with the smallest result, to establish the existence of a vague possible Deity. Even the sanctions of morality were sought in the lowest instincts of human nature, the reason for doing good assigned in the received text-books of ethics being, in effect, "that God is stronger than we are, and able to damn us if we do not." The prevailing religion of the day may be accurately judged of from the most widely popular of its homiletic works, those thrice-famous sermons of Blair's, which were at one time to be found in well-nigh every family of the upper and middle classes of this country, and which may still be discovered in the remoter shelves of the libraries in most country-houses. No one can look into these discourses without admitting the truth of Sir Leslie Stephen's trenchant criticism that "they represent the last stage of theological decay."[1] For unction there is mere mouthing; for the solid common sense of earlier writers, an infinite capacity for repeating the feeblest platitudes; the morality can scarcely be dignified by the name of prudential, unless all prudence be summed up in the command, "Be respectable;" the pages are full of solemn trifling—prosings about adversity and prosperity, eulogies upon the most excellent of virtues, Moderation, and proofs that religion is, upon the whole, conducive to pleasure. John Stuart Mill

[1] *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii. p. 346. The remarks in my following sentence are an abridgement of an admirable page—the next—of Sir Leslie Stephen's book.

accurately sums the matter up: "The age seemed smitten with an incapacity of producing deep or strong feeling, such at least as could ally itself with meditative habits. There were few poets and none of a high order; and philosophy had fallen into the hands of men of a dry prosaic nature, who had not enough of the materials of human feeling in them to imagine any of its more complex and mysterious manifestations; all of which they either left out of their theories, or introduced them with such explanations as no one who had experienced the feelings could receive as adequate." [1]

Such was the dominant school of English thought about the time when Cardinal Newman was born. But beside it there was another which exercised a strong influence over a not inconsiderable number of adherents, and which potently affected the growth of his character and the formation of his opinions. Among the figures conspicuous in the history of England in the eighteenth century there is perhaps none more worthy of careful study than John Wesley. Make all deductions you please for his narrowness, his self-conceit, his extravagance, and still it remains that no one so nearly approaches the fulness of stature of the great heroes of the Christian faith in the early and middle ages. He had more in common with St. Boniface and St. Bernardine of Sienna, with St. Vincent Ferrer and Savonarola, than any teacher whom Protestantism has ever produced. Nor is the formation of the religious body commonly known by his

[1] *Discussions and Dissertations*, vol. i. p. 430.

name—the "people called Methodists" was his way of designating his followers—by any means the most important of the results of his life and labours. It is not too much to say that he, and those whom he formed and influenced, chiefly kept alive in England the idea of a supernatural order during the dull materialism and selfish coldness of the eighteenth century. To him the rise of the Evangelical party in the National Church is undoubtedly due. Romaine and Newton, Venn and Jowett, Milner and Simeon, differing as they did from him on particular doctrines, derived from him that fundamental tenet of religious conversion which they termed "the new birth." It is easy now, as it ever was, to ridicule the grotesque phraseology of these teachers, to make merry over their sour superstitions, their ignorant fanaticism, to detect and pillory their intellectual littleness. It is not easy to estimate adequately the work which they did by reviving the idea of Grace in the Established Church. They were not theologians, they were not philosophers, they were not scholars. Possibly only two of them, Cecil and Scott, can be said to rise above a very low level of mental mediocrity. But they were men who felt the powers of the world to come in an age when that world had become to most little more than an unmeaning phrase; who spoke of a God to pray to, in a generation which knew chiefly of one to swear by; who made full proof of their ministry by signs and wonders parallel to those of the prophetic vision. It was in truth a valley of dry bones in which the Evangelical clergyman of the opening nineteenth

century was set; and as he prophesied there was a noise, and behold, a shaking, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

(III)

In this army John Henry Newman was led to enroll himself in early youth. He has himself told us how, in the autumn of 1816, he fell under the influence of a definite creed, and received into his intellect impressions of dogma which have never been effaced nor obscured; how "the conversations and sermons of that excellent man, long dead, the Rev. Walter Mayers, of Pembroke College, Oxford," were "the human means of the beginning of this divine faith" in him; how, in mature life, he was "still more certain of the inward conversion of which he was then conscious, than that he has hands or feet."[1] Cardinal Newman's earliest religious reading was of authors such as Romaine, Thomas Scott, Joseph Milner, whose works were then the text-books of the Evangelical school. But he also studied attentively two writers of very different characters, both of whom made a deep impression upon his mind: William Law, the non-juror, whose *Serious Call*, it will be remembered, was such a powerful agent in John Wesley's spiritual history, and Bishop Newton, whose work upon the

[1] *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, p. 4.

Prophecies is the very fount and source of an "expository" literature, still dearly cherished by Exeter Hall. In 1816 he was entered at Trinity College, Oxford, and during the whole of his undergraduate course he adhered rigidly to the straitest sect of the Evangelicals. It was not till 1822 that his spiritual horizon began to widen. In that year he came under the influence of Dr. Whately, who, he tells us, "emphatically opened my mind and taught me to think, and to use my reason."[1] It is curious to find him particularly specifying among his obligations to Dr. Whately this: "What he did for me in point of religious opinion was to teach me the existence of the Church as a substantive body or corporation; next to fix in me those anti-Erastian views of Church polity which were one of the most prominent features of the Tractarian Movement." At the same time he formed a friendship with a worthy representative of the classic High Church school of Anglicanism, Dr. Hawkins, then Vicar of St. Mary's, who was the means of great additions to his belief. From him he derived directly the doctrine of Tradition, and indirectly the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration; while Mr. James of Oriel taught him the dogma of Apostolical Succession, and Mr. Blanco White led him "to have freer views on the subject of inspiration than were usual in the Church of England at that time."[2] Still more important were his obligations to Butler, whom he began to read about the year 1823. He regards the study

[1] *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, pp. 11, 12.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 9.

of the *Analogy* as an era in his religious opinions, and refers to it the underlying principles of a great portion of his teaching: Sacramentalism and Probability.[1]

It is manifest that while acquiring these new views he was widely diverging from the standards of orthodoxy received by his Evangelical friends. Among the many legends which have grown up about him is one attributing his final separation from them to the rejection in 1826 of two hundred and fifty amendments, said to have been moved by him to the draft of the annual report of the Oxford Bible Society, of which body, according to the story, he was "third secretary:" amendments directed to the purgation of that document from the strange verbiage which was the outward visible sign of the Low Church spirit. Unfortunately, a word from Cardinal Newman dispelled this amusing myth. "I never was any kind of secretary to the Bible Society," he told me; "and I never moved any amendments at all."[2] There is, however, one grain of truth in the story. It was, indeed, about the year 1826 that John Henry Newman's ties with the Evangelical party were finally severed. But though no longer of them, as a professed adherent, he retained much that he had learned from them. In particular their fundamental doctrine of Grace, that is, of a

[1] By the sacramental system, in the large sense of the word, Cardinal Newman means "the doctrine that material phenomena are both the types and the instruments of real things unseen."—*Apologia*, p. 18. Butler's teaching, "that probability is the guide of life," he considers to have originally led him to "the question of the logical cogency of faith," on which he has "written so much."—*Apologia pro Vita Sua*, p. 11.

[2] Upon this subject see some remarks in Cardinal Newman's *Via Media*, vol. ii. pp. 4–7, ed. 1884.

sensible, supernatural, and direct divine influence upon the soul of man, remained, and continued with him to the end, as a prime and vital verity.

For some little time from 1826 Newman continued unattached to any theological section or school. The old high-and-dry party, the two-bottle orthodox, then predominant in the University, were little to his taste, although he sympathized vehemently with their political opinions; and for the first few years of his residence as a Fellow at Oriel—he had been elected in 1822—he lived very much alone. In 1826 he began a close and tender friendship with Richard Hurrell Froude, never dimmed nor interrupted during the short career of that many-sided and highly-gifted man. Robert Isaac Wilberforce, who, like Froude, was then a Probationer Fellow of Oriel, was also among his most intimate companions, and there were others—their names need not be enumerated here—who were drawn to him by the strong ties of kindred minds, like aspirations, and the many subtle influences engendered by community of academical life. One thing which especially bound together the little knot of men who constituted the original nucleus of the future Tractarian party was an irrepressible dissatisfaction with the religious schools of the day; an eager looking out for deeper and more definite teaching. It may be truly said—the phrase, I think, is Cardinal Newman's—that this feeling was in the air of the epoch. The French Revolution, shattering the framework of society throughout Europe, was but the manifestation in the public order of great intellectual

and spiritual changes. England, indeed, shut off from the Continent by her insular position, and by the policy of the great Minister whose strong hand guided her destinies for so many perilous years, was exempt, to a great extent, from the influence of the general movement of European thought. Still, in England too, there arose the longing—vague, half-expressed, not half-understood—for some better thing, truer and higher and more profound than the ideas of the outworn world could yield: a longing which found quite other manifestations than the Evangelical.

Striking evidence of this feeling is afforded by the reception given to the delineation of the fuller life of a simpler age, which was attempted in the poetry and prose fictions of Sir Walter Scott. "The general need of something more attractive than had offered itself elsewhere"—Cardinal Newman remarks—"led to his popularity, and by means of this popularity he reacted on his readers, stimulating their mental thirst, feeding their hopes, setting before them visions which when once seen are not easily forgotten, and silently indoctrinating them with nobler ideas, which might afterwards be appealed to as first principles."[1] Byron and Shelley, too, bear witness in a different way to the working in the English mind of the ferment with which the European intellect was leavened. But of the actual movement of contemporary thought and feeling upon the Continent little was definitely understood in England. The great reaction in France against the

[1] "Essay on the Prospects of the Anglican Church," reprinted in *Essays Critical and Historical*, vol. i. p. 267.

eighteenth century, the initiation of which will be in the event, and, indeed, even now is, Chateaubriand's best title to fame, was very faintly appreciated among us, and the masters of the new literature in Germany were scarcely even heard of. For long years Goethe was known in this country only by Sir Walter Scott's translation of one of his earliest and least significant works; and of Lessing, Schiller, Tieck, Richter, Novalis, the two Schlegels, it might be said, with almost literal truth, that they were not known at all. Kantism was an epithet significant of "absurdity, wickedness, and horror," and was freely used to label any "frantic exaggeration in sentiment," or "crude fever dream in opinion," which might anywhere break forth.[1] Slowly, however, but surely, did the new critical philosophy infiltrate itself into this country, through the most metaphysical head which this country has ever produced. Samuel Taylor Coleridge was the first among English thinkers to study and understand Kant, to assimilate his teaching, and to reproduce it in a new form.[2] Rejecting with disgust the physical method which he found predominant in English speculation, he discerned in the transcendentalism of Kant a higher and nobler system than the materialism

[1] Carlyle's *Miscellaneous Essays*, vol. i. p. 56.

[2] I find the late Professor Green stating this fact in a somewhat different way: "The last generation took its notions about Kant chiefly from Coleridge, and though Coleridge, if he would have taken the necessary trouble, could have expounded him as no one else could, he in fact did little more than convey to his countrymen the grotesquely false impression that Kant had sought to establish the existence of a mysterious intellectual faculty called Reason, the organ of truth inaccessible to the Understanding."—*Academy*, September 22, 1877.

of Locke or the utilitarianism of Paley. Coleridge, indeed, was no blind disciple of his Teutonic master. It may be truly said of him that he was "Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri." His mind was too original to allow him to be a mere echo of other men's thoughts. It is, however, as he used to insist, to Kant that he owes, with much else, that distinction between the Understanding and the Reason—*Verstand* and *Vernunft*—which is one of his fundamental positions; which, indeed, he considered essential to any profitable study of psychology. But the philosophy of Coleridge is too great a subject to be dealt with here. I can only observe that its influence upon the mind of his age was far more potent than is generally understood. In my judgment he is to English thought of the nineteenth century pretty much what Locke is to English thought of the eighteenth century. I am, however, immediately concerned with his effect upon that particular intellectual and spiritual phase represented by the Tractarian Movement. Cardinal Newman, in a paper published in the *British Critic* in 1839, reckons him one of its precursors, as "providing a philosophical basis for it, as instilling a higher philosophy into inquiring minds than they had hitherto been accustomed to accept."

The action of this great thinker's doctrine was, indeed, to a large extent, indirect. It is through the poetry of his comrade and disciple Wordsworth that his metaphysics, stripped of technicalities, and presented in a popular form, won the widest acceptance and exercised the deepest influence. "I wish to be

considered a teacher or nothing," Wordsworth wrote to his friend Sir George Beaumont. The age had need of that teaching, bewitched as it was by the Circean strains of Byron's morbid egotism, and the irresistible charm of the splendid verse in which Shelley clothed his passionate dreams, soaring like his own skylark away from this working-day world until he is lost in the clouds of his ecstatic idealizations. How many felt in Wordsworth's own generation, how many more have felt since, the healing influence of his poetry, as of Nature herself!

> "As snow those inward pleadings fall,
> As soft, as bright, as pure, as cool,
> With gentle weight and gradual,
> And sink into the feverish soul."[1]

"I have not written for superficial observers and unthinking minds," the poet explained to his friend. But from the first he drew to him the more thoughtful and true-hearted of his age, "non solum dulcissimæ poeseos, verum etiam divinæ veritatis antistes:"[2] and among those who were most deeply influenced by him was John Keble.

(IV)

The *Christian Year*, which appeared in 1827, marks an epoch in the religious history of the century.

[1] I need hardly say, perhaps, that these lines are quoted from Cardinal Newman's magnificent religious poem, *St. Philip in his God.*

[2] Dedication to William Wordsworth—"viro vere philosopho et vati sacro"—of Keble's *Prælectiones Academicæ.*

Cardinal Newman, writing of it nineteen years later, and looking back upon it and its influence from an external point of view, observed—

"Much certainly came of the *Christian Year*. . . . Coming from one who had such claims on his readers, from the weight of his name, the depth of his devotional and ethical tone, and the special gift of consolation of which his poems were the evidence, it wrought a great work in the Establishment. It kindled hearts towards his Church; it gave something for the gentle and forlorn to cling to; it raised up advocates for it among those who, if God and their good angel had suffered it, might have wandered away into some sort of philosophy and acknowledged no Church at all."[1]

It did all this, certainly, and there can be no question that it acted as a powerful instrument in drawing together those who subsequently constituted the Tractarian party. It is, however, very difficult for men of the present generation to understand the sort of influence exercised by this volume of devotional poetry when it first appeared. It is not hard to account for its popularity; but it is hard to conceive now how it could have been an important factor in a great movement of religious thought. Judged coldly and by the ordinary canons of criticism, the book may be justly praised for delicacy and refinement of style, for smoothness and harmony of numbers, for correctness of taste, for a sweet and gentle mysticism, and a kind of natural sacramentalism. But there is no trace of the fine frenzy which, according

[1] *Essays Critical and Historical*, vol. ii. p. 245.

to the Aristotelian dictum, is the chief note of high poetic inspiration. Nor do we find in it the keenness of vision, the intensity of feeling, the passion of appeal, by which the souls of men are wont to be kindled, and which we are led to look for in compositions playing an important part in a religious revival. If we compare John Keble with the poets of the previous century whose hymns were such a living power, it must be allowed that, though he never sinks to their lowest level, he certainly never rises to their highest. There is nothing in the *Christian Year* which for grandeur of conception, splendour and fire of diction, natural freedom, easy grace, and strong upwelling of religious emotion, can be ranked with some of Charles Wesley's best verses: verses which perhaps have more in common with the masterpieces of Adam of St. Victor and St. Bernard, than any other in our language. Indeed, John Keble's professed purpose was to exhibit the soothing tendency of the Prayer-book: and that this purpose was accomplished with rare skill and beauty, who can doubt?

The curious thing is that the volume achieved so much beyond what its author aimed at; and that this was so is an emphatic testimony to the needs of the age in which he wrote. The high-and-dry school had little to offer in satisfaction of spiritual aspirations. In place of living bread—*panis vivus et vitalis*—it had nothing to set before the hungry soul but the stone of theological petrifactions. Evangelicalism was in its decadence. It was perishing of intellectual

inanition. Beginning, in Apostolic-wise, with "the foolishness of preaching," it had ended unapostolically in the preaching of foolishness. Its divinity was confined to a few isolated dogmas, which torn from their place in systematic theology, had no enduring principle of life. For scholarship it had unctuous pulpit platitudes; for philosophy, the *deliramenta* of apocalyptic tea-tables. From art it turned away with comminatory references to "texts" in Exodus and Leviticus. To those who like John Henry Newman had made trial of it, and had found it wanting, and to those who like Hurrell Froude had never been drawn by it from conventional orthodoxy, the *Christian Year* came as "a new music, the music of a school long unknown in England, when the general tone of religious literature was so nerveless and impotent."[1] Cardinal Newman judges that the two main intellectual truths which it brought home to him were the principle of sacramentalism and the doctrine as to certitude which he had already learned from Butler. Such was the influence of the *Christian Year*. Cardinal Newman reckoned it the original bond of those who were to become the leaders of the Oxford Movement, the formal start of which he dates from Keble's once famous discourse on *National Apostacy*, preached at St. Mary's in 1833.

It was in that year that Cardinal Newman began, "out of his own head," the series of papers from which the movement received its truest and most characteristic name of Tractarian. There can be no

[1] *Apologia*, p. 18.

room for doubt that its chief springs of action are to be found in the *Tracts for the Times*, and in those *Oxford Sermons*, which, as Mr. Copeland says, produced "a living effect" upon their hearers. The importance of the part played in the movement by Cardinal Newman admits of an easy test. Is it possible to conceive of it without him? We can conceive of it without the two Kebles, without Isaac Williams, without Dr. Pusey, who did not join it until 1836. They are, if we may so speak, of its accidents; John Henry Newman is of its essence. It grew, indeed, out of the occult sympathies of kindred minds, and was the issue of manifold causes, long working according to their own laws. But the objective form which it assumed was due, principally, to Newman's supreme confidence, irresistible earnestness, absolute fearlessness, and to the unique personal influence which accompanied, and in part sprang from, these endowments. The specific danger, as it was judged, which supplied the occasion for its initiation was the Bill for the suppression of certain Irish Bishoprics. But this measure was an occasion merely. To Newman, since at the age of fourteen he first looked into Voltaire and Hume, the primary fact of the age had been what he denominates Liberalism, by which term, as he explained upon a memorable occasion, he means "the doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion, but that one creed is as good as another." [1] To this he sought to oppose the

[1] See his address delivered in the Palazzo della Pigna, upon the reception of the *biglietto* announcing his elevation to the Cardinalate.

principle of dogma—from first to last the basis of his religion. He endeavoured to meet the new spirit with a definite religious teaching as to a visible Church, the kingdom in this world of a present though invisible King, a great supernatural fact among men, represented in this country by the Anglican Establishment, and speaking through its formularies and the living voice of its episcopate, and to him, as to each man in particular, through his own Bishop, to whom he looked up as "the successor of the Apostles, the Vicar of Christ."[1] And so he tells us—

"[The Oxford] Movement started on the ground of maintaining ecclesiastical authority, as opposed to the Erastianism of the State. It exhibited the Church as the one earthly object of religious loyalty and veneration, the source of all spiritual power and jurisdiction, and the channel of all grace. It represented it to be the interest, as well as the duty, of Churchmen, the bond of peace and the secret of strength, to submit their judgment in all things to her decision. And it taught that this divinely founded Church was realized and brought into effect, in our country, in the National Establishment, which was the outward form or development of a continuous dynasty and hereditary power which descended from the Apostles. It gave, then, to that Establishment, in its officers, its laws, its usages, and its worship, that devotion and obedience which are correlative to the very idea of the Church. It set up on high the bench of Bishops and the Book of Common Prayer as the authority to which it was itself to bow, with which it was to cow and overpower an Erastian State."[2]

Such, according to Cardinal Newman, was the "clear, unvarying line of thought" upon which the

[1] *Apologia*, p. 51. [2] *Anglican Difficulties*, vol. i. p. 130.

movement of 1833 proceeded, and a careful study of the documents in which its history is to be traced, amply confirms, if confirmation be wanted, the correctness of this view. The progress of Tractarianism, from *Tract* 1 to *Tract* 90, was the natural growth, the logical development, of the idea of submission to ecclesiastical authority. It was a progress leading ever further from the historical position, the first principles, of the Church of England as by law established. The enterprise in which the Tractarians were engaged was, unconsciously to themselves, an attempt to transform the character of the Anglican communion, to undo the work of the Reformation, to reverse the traditions of three centuries. "Unconsciously to themselves," indeed. Nor need we wonder at their unconsciousness. It is, as Clough says—

> "What do we see? Each man a space
> Of some few yards before his face."

No man may see more. "If we would ascertain the real course of a principle we must look at it at a certain distance and as history represents it to us."[1] But who can project himself into times to come, and survey the present from the standpoint of the future?

The Tractarians were as men who had launched upon unknown seas, full of strange tides and secret currents, which swiftly and imperceptibly bore them away, baffling their vain attempts at steerage. Others, however, could see more clearly than was possible to them the direction in which they were drifting. Even so early as the year 1836, Cardinal Newman says,

[1] *Apologia*, p. 263.

"a cry was heard on all sides of us, that the Tracts and the writings of the Fathers would lead us to become Catholics, before we were aware of it."[1] It was then that he set about a defence of the movement and its principles, and produced his treaties upon *The Prophetical Office of the Church, viewed relatively to Romanism and Popular Protestantism.* This work appeared in 1837. Its subject was the *Via Media*, a designation "which had already been applied to the Anglican system by writers of repute. Its main object was to furnish an approximation in one or two points towards a correct theory of the duties and office of the Church Catholic." "If we deny that the Roman view of the Church is true," the author says, "we are bound in very shame to state what we hold ourselves." The *Lectures on the Prophetical Office* attempted to put forward such a statement. There was, however, an initial objection, which their author felt keenly, and stated in the Introduction to his work, with his habitual candour and peculiar power :—

"When we profess our *Via Media* as the very truth of the Apostles, we seem to bystanders to be mere antiquarians or pedants amusing ourselves with illusions or learned subtlcties, and unable to grapple with things as they are. Protestantism and Popery are real religions. No one can doubt about them. They have furnished the mould in which nations have been cast, but the *Via Media*, viewed as an integral system, has never had existence, except on paper."

He grants the objection, although he endeavours to lessen it.

[1] *Apologia*, p. 63.

"It still remains to be tried whether what is called Anglo-Catholicism, the religion of Andrewes, Laud, Hammond, Butler, and Wilson, is capable of being professed, acted on, and maintained on a large sphere of action and through a sufficient period, or whether it be a new modification and transition state of Romanism or of popular Protestantism."

The trial was made, and we know with what results. In these *Lectures on the Prophetical Office* the case stated is put with marvellous dialectic skill and great persuasive power; but the logic of facts is stronger than the strongest logic of words. And facts were against the *Via Media*, the facts both of antiquity and of modern times. Its author had taken the historical foundation for granted.[1] It was an unfortunate assumption. The national feeling did but assert, with whatever passion and prejudice, the testimony of the national history—of which, indeed, that feeling is to a large extent the outcome—against the ethos of the movement, as alien from the established religion. It was nothing to the purpose to show that the views put forward by the Tractarians, with ever-increasing boldness, might be paralleled, one from this Anglican authority, another from that. It was not pretended that any accredited writer of the Establishment had ever ventured to hold such a body of doctrine as was at last set forth in *Tract* 90. The essentially Protestant mind of the country was shocked at the

[1] Preface to the third edition, p. xxiii. In the *Apologia*, pp. 114–120, and p. 139, Cardinal Newman tells us of his dismay when ancient ecclesiastical history dislosed to him veritable examples of a *Via Media* in the Monophysite and Arian heresies. See also the *Twelfth Lecture on Anglican Difficulties.*

attribution of a theology practically indistinguishable from the Tridentine, to a Church whose time-honoured boast was (as South had declared) that "it alone made Protestantism considerable in Europe."

Such was the ultimate resolution of the idea—dogmatic, sacerdotal, hierarchical—of the movement of 1833. To this goal had it conducted its authors. *Tract* 90 was received throughout the country with a storm of indignation, and the living rulers of the Establishment began to move. "These are they," Cardinal Newman says, "who reverse the Roman's maxim, and are wont to shrink from the contumacious, and to be valiant towards the submissive."[1] This little touch of bitterness is not unnatural, still, I venture to say that Anglican Bishops seem to have acted towards Tractarianism with much long-suffering, and in the event to have condemned it only when the primary obligation of fidelity to themselves compelled them to do so. Excellent men, but not heroic; respectable, but not sacerdotal; solidly adhering to things settled, and, in Carlyle's phrase, mainly occupied in burning their own smoke—what sympathy could they have had with such a movement? Indeed, *Tract* 1, in which the author declared that he "could not wish them a more blessed termination of their course than the spoiling of their goods and martyrdom," might reasonably have distressed and alarmed them. But for years they bore and forbore; it was difficult to be hard upon men who assured them that they were

[1] "Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos."—*Anglican Difficulties*, vol. i. p. 152.

"Apostles true." And when at length they acted, in obedience to strong popular pressure, surely no action could have been milder. Contrast it with any conceivable action by Catholic Bishops in respect of a Protestantizing movement within the communion of Rome.

Still, in the event, they did undoubtedly pronounce against *Tract* 90 in a series of charges lasting through three years. "It was a formal, determinate movement," Cardinal Newman says: "I recognized it as a condemnation. It was the only one that was in their power."[1] It was the beginning of the end. To the adverse verdict of public opinion, to the censure of academical boards, he might have been comparatively indifferent. He had not entered upon his course to be turned aside from it *arbitrio popularis auræ*, or to quail before the *ardor civium prava jubentium*. But the condemnation of the episcopate was a fatal blow to the Tractarian party. Its leaders felt that "their occupation was gone. Their initial principle, their basis, external authority, was cut away from under their feet. They had set their fortunes upon a cast, and they had lost." "Henceforward they had nothing left but to shut up their school and retire into the country, . . . unless, indeed, they took up some other theory, unless they changed their ground, unless they strangely forgot their own luminous and most keen convictions," "ceased to be what they were, and became what they were not," or, "looked out for truth and peace elsewhere."[2] These were, indeed, the

[1] *Apologia*, p. 139. [2] *Anglican Difficulties*, vol. i. p. 153.

three courses open to the adherents of the movement, and some followed one of them, some another. There were those who, withdrawing from the world not moving to their mind, to the seclusion of rural parishes, sought there to reap the reward of "toil unsevered from tranquillity," in the beneficent activity of an English clergyman's life, and the soothing influences of his home. Many "vindicated the right of private judgment," modified their views, and cast in their lot with other sections of religious thought. No inconsiderable number, after more or fewer years of anxiety and suspense, determined that the Church of Rome was the true home of the theological idea which they could not surrender. Of these was John Henry Newman. It is unnecessary to dwell here upon the workings of his mind which led him to this conclusion. They may be followed, step by step, in the *Apologia* and the *Essay on Development*. It was on September 25, 1843, that his last words as an Anglican clergyman were spoken to the little knot of friends assembled in the chapel of his house at Littlemore to keep with him the anniversary of its consecration. There were few dry eyes there save the preacher's, as, from the text which had been that of his first sermon nineteen years before, he spoke to them of "the parting of friends." "Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening." His sun was set, and even had come. They knew well what he meant when, in the sacred language which "veils our feelings while it gives expression to them," he bade them keep the feast, "even though in haste and

with bitter herbs, and with loins girded and with staff in hand, as they who have no continuing city, but seek one to come."

(V)

The first Earl Russell once spoke of Cardinal Newman's secession from the Church of England as an inexplicable event. It is difficult to understand how any one can desire a clearer explanation than that which Cardinal Newman himself has given of it —an explanation which seems to be of a quite convincing candour and cogency. His logical consistency appears to be as much beyond cavil as his moral rectitude. He started with the assumption that the system finally developed in *Tract* 90 was the true system of the Anglican communion. Of that system submission to ecclesiastical authority was the keystone. And when the adverse sentence of such authority proceeded against him he was true to his principles, he accepted it,[1] although it was to him as the bitterness of death. Never was his loyalty to the Church of England more conspicuously manifested than in the supreme hour when he left her, "parting with all that his heart loved, and turning his face to a strange land." At the time indeed, few, very few, could

[1] In 1843 he wrote to Archdeacon Manning: "If there ever was a case, in which an individual teacher has been put aside and virtually put away by a community, mine is one. . . . It is felt—I am far from denying justly felt—that I am a foreign material, and cannot assimilate with the Church of England."—*Apologia*, p. 220.

understand this; and their calmer voices were drowned in the prevailing ululation. The secession, at last, of such a man, for years an object of ever-increasing suspicion and distrust, shocked the public mind of that day in a way that can now be hardly realized, and confused the judgments even of the wise. There is nothing which men in general resent so deeply as an action which tends to unsettle their opinions. The utterances of indignation and disgust are seldom weighed with nice discrimination, and an accusation of deceit is the shape in which popular anger most readily finds vent.

It was natural that the cry of treachery should go up; but the cry was as ill-founded as it was natural. If John Henry Newman, and his friends who shared his deep ineradicable convictions, instead of betaking themselves whither those convictions logically led and could honestly be held, had retained their places in a communion with whose fundamental positions they were at variance, the accusation of treachery would have admitted of no extenuation upon the ground of popular prejudice and the excitement of the hour. To remain in the Church of England as by law established, while ostentatiously defying that law; to revile and browbeat ecclesiastical rulers, while professing to reverence them as divinely appointed; to introduce stealthily the dogmas and the ritual of Rome in a great national institution, whose history, whose formularies, whose *Articles of Religion*, are a standing protest against Rome; to convulse and bring to the verge of destruction the Anglican spiritual edifice,

while bearing its name and eating its bread,—such would have been, in truth, the conduct of traitors. But Cardinal Newman has himself told us how such a course was regarded by him.

"I can understand, I can sympathize with, those old-world thinkers whose commentators are Mant and D'Oyly, whose theologian is Tomlin, whose ritualist is Wheatley, and whose canonist is Burns. . . . In these days three hundred years is a respectable antiquity, and traditions recognized in law courts, and built into the structure of society, may well without violence be imagined to be immemorial. Those also I can understand who take their stand upon the Prayer-book; or those who honestly profess to follow the consensus of Anglican divines, as the voice of authority and the standard of faith. Moreover, I can quite enter into the sentiment with which members of the liberal and infidel school investigate the history and the documents of the early Church. They profess a view of Christianity truer than the world has ever had; nor on the assumption of their principles is there anything shocking to good sense in this profession. . . . Free-thinkers and broad-thinkers, Laudians and Prayer-book Christians, high-and-dry and Establishment men, all these [I] understand; but what [I] feel so prodigious is this . . . that such as you . . . should come forth into open day with your new edition of the Catholic faith, different from that held in any existing body of Christians anywhere, which not half a dozen men all over the world would honour with their *imprimatur;* and then withal should be as positive about its truth in every part, as if the voice of mankind were with you instead of being against you. . . . You do not follow the Bishops of the National Church; you disown its existing traditions; you are discontented with its divines; you protest against its law courts; you shrink from its laity; you outstrip its Prayer-book. You have in all respects an eclectic or original religion of your own. . . . Nearly all your divines,

if not all, call themselves Protestants, and you anathematize the name. Who makes the concessions to Catholics that you do, yet remain separate from them? Who among Anglican authorities would speak of Penance as a Sacrament as you do? Who of them encourages, much less insists upon, auricular confession, as you do? Or makes fasting an obligation? Or uses the crucifix and the rosary? Or reserves the consecrated bread? Or believes in miracles as existing in your communion? Or administers, as I believe you do, Extreme Unction? In some points you prefer Rome, in others Greece, in others England, in others Scotland; and of that preference your own private judgment is the ultimate sanction. What am I to say in answer to conduct so preposterous? Say you go by any authority whatever, and I shall know where to find you and I shall respect you. Swear by any school of religion, old or modern, by Ronge's Church, or by the Evangelical Alliance, nay, by yourselves, and I shall know what you mean, and will listen to you. But do not come to me with the latest fashion of opinion the world has seen, and protest to me that it is the oldest. Do not come to me at this time of day with views palpably new, isolated, original, *sui generis*, warranted old neither by Christian nor unbeliever, and challenge me to answer what I really have not the patience to read. Life is not long enough for such trifles. . . . The basis of [the Tractarian] party was the professed abnegation of private judgment: your basis is the professed exercise of it."[1]

John Henry Newman's secession from the Church of England may, then, justly be regarded as the supreme proof of his good faith. It must not, however, be forgotten that it has another bearing. It was also the seal of the good faith of his opponents. Perhaps the most influential of these—certainly from

[1] *Anglican Difficulties*, vol. i. pp. 155–163.

the historical point of view the most considerable—was Thomas Arnold. And, widely as their views differed, fierce as was the polemical strife between them, profound as was the conviction of each as to the appalling mischief inherent in the system of the other, we may, at this distance of time, place their names together as among the noblest and best adorning the annals of our country in the nineteenth century. In subtleness of intellect, in dialectical skill, in imaginative cogency, Dr. Arnold must indeed be judged far inferior to his great opponent. A distinguished French critic has well observed: "His talent was not, perhaps, upon the same level with his character; it was his character which inspired his talent," and was the source of his "extraordinary ascendancy over his pupils."[1] Passionate alike in his hatred of ecclesiasticism and in his love of truth, it was not to theology and history, but to his moral sympathies, that he looked for light to guide him in his spiritual and intellectual difficulties. The theory in which he so earnestly believed, and in the name of which he taught—a theory of a Christian state with the politics of Aristotle and the ethics of St. Paul—was as purely a paper theory as the *Via Media* which he so detested, and has as utterly passed away. This theory has much in common with that of Hooker; but it was from Samuel Taylor Coleridge that Arnold derived it in greatest measure. It is a curious testimony to the many-sided genius of that great thinker that his doctrine, while providing, as

[1] Scherer, *Mélanges d'Histoire Religieuse*, pp. 219, 220.

Cardinal Newman tells us, "a philosophical basis" to the Tractarian Movement, should also have supplied the inspiration, and furnished the arms, which were to have so large a share in bringing about that movement's overthrow.

(VI)

The Tractarian party was defeated then, and crumbled into dissolution. Its leader and its most consistent adherents went out of the National Church, because, in truth, they were not of it. The house, which they had reared so laboriously, was built upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it. The practical results of Tractarianism have, however, been of the highest importance. Let me now go on to indicate a few of the more obvious of them.

And first, as to the Church of England. The Tractarians thought they had failed: and so they had as to the main object which they had at heart. But, as so often happens in the affairs of men, while not accomplishing what they intended, they accomplished much that they did not intend. The Oxford Movement, discredited in its system, lived on in its sentiment. *Tract* 90, which most truly represents its dogmatic teaching, has been forgotten except as a document of history, or a curiosity of literature. It is far otherwise with the various volumes which

embody its feeling, practical or emotional. The *Christian Year* has become a household book. Next to the Bible and Prayer-book it is one of the most popular religious works in England, and wherever English religion has followed the English flag. Cardinal Newman's *Oxford Sermons*, Mr. Copeland has truly said, "have acted like leaven on the mind, and language, and literature of the Church in this country."[1] A treasury of all that is delicate and tender in the religious spirit, they are, and are likely long to remain, the chosen devotional reading of thousands, who are profoundly indifferent, or actually opposed, to the author's doctrinal views. It is not too much to say that Tractarianism has done for the national religion of England a work similar to that which *Le Génie du Christianisme* did, some years before, for the national religion of France. It has produced an intelligent and sympathetic study of the art, the institutions, the spiritual history of the past; it has engendered a revival of external reverence in public worship; it has aroused a deep sense of the sanctity of common life; it has created a transcendental school in striking contrast with the dull, dreary, depressing pietism which, up to the date when it arose, presented the only outlet in the Establishment for devout aspirations and mystical affections. It has cleansed our ancient cathedrals and churches from the squalor of centuries, and has clothed them in some semblance of their pristine magnificence; it has erected new religious edifices throughout the land, some hardly

[1] Preface to the new edition, p. 7.

inferior in beauty of construction and splendour of decoration to the works of medieval piety. All this, and much more which should be added to make the picture complete, and which each reader may supply for himself, is in large measure due to the movement originated by John Henry Newman. Thus, even now, he is no mere name of the past in the Church of England, but a present power, working, and long to work; how fruitfully no man can judge.

And, if we turn to the Catholic Church, the influence of Tractarianism has been, at the least, as important there as in the Anglican Establishment. Perhaps, it is not too much to say, that to it, in large measure, is due all that most signally distinguishes the present position of Catholics in this country from that which they occupied in the early nineteenth century. No doubt the Act of Emancipation rendered possible the change which has come about. But the Catholic body in England in 1829, when the Act was passed, was hardly in a condition to profit, to any large extent, by that great measure of justice. Far be it from me to write one word sounding in disparagement of men for whom I entertain a reverential admiration which no words can adequately express. Who indeed can but revere and admire the indefectible fidelity of that heroic band of hereditary confessors? No Englishman, surely, can fail to be touched by it. But I suppose it is an unquestionable fact of history that the political, educational, and social disabilities of centuries had told disastrously upon the Catholics of England. How could it have been otherwise? For generations

they had dwelt in darkness and in the shadow of death, and the iron had entered into their souls. *Sine adjutorio, inter mortuos liber, sicut vulnerati dormientes in sepulchris*, is the true description of the state in which they found themselves when they were once more admitted to their constitutional rights. It was opportune, then, that the fresher zeal, the wider cultivation, the uncramped energies of the band of proselytes which John Henry Newman headed, were placed, just when they were, at the service of Catholicity in England.

The new blood brought into the Catholic communion is certainly a very important result of the Tractarian Movement; and its importance is not restricted either to the geographical limits of this country or to the chronological limits of this age. Still, I do not think I am hazarding a doubtful prediction in saying that, in the long run, the most considerable product of Tractarianism, so far as the Catholic Church is concerned, will be found to be her gain of John Henry Newman, her acquisition of this one mind—a mind upon a level with that of Pascal or Bossuet, and uniting to much which was highest and best in both, great endowments which were given to neither.

It is very difficult, however, to set down in writing anything that will convey a just impression of the work which Cardinal Newman did, and is still doing, for the Church with which he found the true home of his religious convictions. The works published by him after his secession, great as their effect has already

been, represent only a small portion of it. From his retreat at Birmingham went forth through the Catholic world the same subtle influence which once went forth from Oriel and Littlemore,—an influence profoundly affecting events, not in their more vulgar manifestations which meet the eye, but in their secret springs and prime sources. To others he left conspicuous positions and the "loud applause and Aves vehement" which greeted their achievements there, himself taking unquestioningly that lowest place which his ecclesiastical superiors assigned him, going forth, as of old, to his work and to his labour in his appointed sphere; and at last, in the "calm sunset of his various day," as unquestioningly obeying the voice of authority bidding him go up higher, and setting him among the princes of his people. His life, after he joined the communion of Rome, was to a great extent "a hidden life;" a life of religious retirement and abstraction, not indeed from the world's thought and great interests, but from its selfish striving and low desires; that life, as some one has described it, *à la fois en nous et hors de nous*, which is perhaps the most favourable to the development of high spiritual and intellectual gifts. So far as its external surroundings are concerned, it was spent among a strange people; a population given up to grimy industrialism, to "the dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion," and possessing little in common with the visitant who had exchanged the learned leisure and antique beauty of Oxford for the "*fumum et opes strepitumque*" of their modern and unlovely

city. There he passed from mature manhood to green old age, and there, in the fulness of years and of honour, the summons to depart came to him. Thence his sound went out into all lands. A simple priest, holding no position of authority, living tranquilly with his brethren, his utterances have sunk into the thinking minds of his communion, throughout the world, as those of no other member of his Church. Not one of his words has fallen to the ground. This must be duly pondered in judging of his life as a Catholic.

> "Not on the vulgar mass
> Called 'work' must sentence pass,
> Things done that took the eye and had the price;
> O'er which, from level stand,
> The low world laid its hand,
> Found straightway to its mind,
> Could value in a trice;
> But all the world's coarse thumb
> And finger failed to plumb,
> So passed in making up the main account:"

all that must be duly reckoned when the time comes to speak fully of his action in the Catholic Church. For the time is not come yet. That history must be left to the day—if it ever dawns—when his papers are released from the limbo in which they are so unaccountably detained.

The world knows enough of his Catholic life, however, to trace its main lines, to discern the dominant ideas, to appreciate the general significance. His later writings tell us much; like his earlier, they are true revelations of himself; from some points of

view, indeed, truer, for in them we have the ultimate resolution of his philosophical and theological opinions, and the mature development of his literary gifts. Thus the *Grammar of Assent* is the fuller expansion and orderly arrangement of the philosophic system first set forth in his *Sermons before the University of Oxford*. His *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, and *Upon Various Occasions*, certainly surpass in intensity of power any of his former productions, whether in pages of appalling description which recall the *via terribile* of Michael Angelo, or in passages of more than earthly beauty and sweetness, which seem like a translation into words of a picture of Fra Angelico. I am here concerned with them, however, merely as documents of history, as notes and memorials of his work, as serving to shadow forth, however faintly, the more public side of his activity as a Catholic.

That activity was to a large extent of a controversial kind; Cardinal Newman would gladly have had it otherwise. His ideal of existence would rather have been "to behold the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies." But for him, as for Milton, it was not so ordered. His course lay "in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes," and in that rough element his endeavour was ever to do, with all his might, the duty which lay nearest to him. And when he had himself embraced Catholicism, he felt that his first duty was towards those whom he had left behind. His heart yearned towards his brethren. They had gone one mile with him: he would compel them to go twain. That upon

their own principles they ought to follow him is the scope of most of his earlier Catholic sermons, and of those *Lectures on Anglican Difficulties*, originally delivered in London in 1850, which created so great an impression at the time, and which, as years have gone on, have exercised an ever-increasing influence. It does not fall within my present scope to examine in detail the arguments which he there employs. But I may remark, generally, that the effect of his writings upon what is called the Anglican controversy has been to place it upon quite another footing from that on which it formerly stood, and to lift it into a higher sphere. He puts aside, for example, when discussing Anglican Orders, dreary gropings into minute intricate passages and obscure corners of past occurrences, as unsatisfactory except to antiquaries, who delight in researches into the past for their own sake.[1] He brings you face to face with "broad visible facts," with great manifest historical phenomena. Thus, if he is treating "De Ecclesia," he inquires what the true logical idea of a Church is, and what is that idea as it has actually lived and worked, as it has from the first been apprehended by Saints and Doctors, and received by the *orbis terrarum*. And he draws it out in its particulars, as a divine creation, a supernatural order in the world, appealing to the human conscience as the natural order appeals to the human senses, the City of God tabernacling among men, the Living Oracle of God in the earth, the inerrant Judge of Faith and Morals

[1] See "Letter to Father Coleridge" in *Essays Critical and Historical*, vol. ii. p. 109.

until the consummation of all things, gathering, in each successive generation, the elect into a polity in belief of the truth, at once a philosophy, and a religious rite, and a political power, as its Divine Author is Prophet, Priest, and King. And then, he asks, Can any man believe the Church of England to be this, or in any true sense to represent it? Not that he is insensible to so much that is excellent and winning in Anglicanism.

"Its portions of Catholic teaching, its 'decency and order,' the pure and beautiful English of its prayers, its literature, the piety found among its members, the influence of its superiors and friends, its historical associations, its domestic character, the charm of a country life, the remembrance of past years,—there is all this and much more to attach the mind to the national worship. But attachment is not trust, nor is to obey the same as to look up to and to rely upon; nor do I think that any thoughtful or educated man can simply believe in the *word* of the Established Church. I never met any such person who did, or said he did, and I do not think that such a person is possible."[1]

The whole matter, as he judges of it, turns upon the question whether there is in the world such a thing as a Church, in the true sense of the word. Throughout his long career the deep underlying convictions which guided him were unchanged. Not only is it true of him that "his wandering step" was ever "obedient to high thoughts," but it is also true that the thoughts were always, in substance, the same. As an Anglican, his battle was on behalf of the dogmatic principle. As a Catholic, he carried on the

[1] *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, p. 232.

same battle, under different conditions. He quitted the Church of England when he became convinced that it was in no true sense dogmatic, but merely "a civil establishment daubed with divinity."[1] And he says in another place :—

"There came on me an extreme astonishment that I had ever imagined it to be a portion of the Catholic Church . . . Forthwith I could not get myself to see in it anything else than . . . a mere national institution. As if my eyes were suddenly opened, so I saw it—spontaneously, apart from any definite act of reason or any argument; and so I have seen it ever since. . . . I gazed at [the Catholic Church] almost passively, as a great objective fact. I looked at her; at her rites, her ceremonial, and her precepts; and I said, 'This *is* a religion:' and then when I looked back upon the poor Anglican Church, for which I had laboured so hard, and upon all that appertained to it, and thought of our various attempts to dress it up doctrinally and æsthetically, it seemed to me to be the veriest of nonentities."[2]

This is the main thesis of Cardinal Newman's earlier Catholic sermons and of his *Lectures on Anglican Difficulties*;—that the Church of England is not an oracle of religious truth; that Rome is the natural, logical, and true home of the idea of Tractarianism. And the course of events in the Anglican communion has been such as to add much point to his argument. The defeat of Tractarianism was the victory of Liberalism, and Liberalism has reaped the full fruits of its triumph. One judgment after another

[1] *Via Media*, vol. i. p. 339, note of 1877.
[2] *Apologia*, p. 340.

of the Supreme Appellate Court of the Established Church has deprived it of any semblance of dogmatic character which it may once have possessed, and has reduced it to the position of an exponent of the most conflicting opinions on theological subjects. If Bishop Watson has rightly defined Protestantism to be "the right of saying what you think, and of thinking what you please," the Church of England, unquestionably, is the most Protestant of ecclesiastical communities.

So much must suffice with regard to Cardinal Newman's action in the Anglican controversy. It is, as I have observed, a continuation of that championship of the dogmatic principle which distinguished him as a Protestant. And the same may be said of the course which he took with regard to controversies among Catholics. While he strenuously combated, on the one hand, the Liberalism which strikes at the root of the dogmatic principle, he was, on the other, an equally uncompromising opponent of those who, as he judged, sought to overlay the Catholic creed with private interpretation, and to impose their unauthorized shibboleths as authoritative teaching — to impress upon the ecumenical attributes of the Church a partisan character. The doctrines defined of late years, which are popularly supposed to be the greatest stumbling-blocks, never, in themselves, presented any difficulties to him, as a Catholic. The promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was hailed by him in a passage not surpassed, perhaps, in any of his writings, for "tender grace" and

splendour of diction.[1] And the need which he held to exist, before he joined the communion of Rome, for "an infallible chair" to judge in controversies of faith, supplied one of the arguments which attracted him towards it.[2] But doctrinal teaching is one thing; the tone and temper of religious factions are quite another.

"From the day I became a Catholic [he wrote in 1875] to this day, now close upon thirty years, I have never had a moment's misgiving that the Communion of Rome is that Church which the Apostles set up at Pentecost. . . . Nor have I ever for a moment hesitated in my conviction, since 1845, that it was my clear duty to join that Catholic Church, as I did then join it, when in my conscience I felt it to be divine. . . . Never for a moment have I wished myself back. But [he adds] I had more to try and afflict me, in various ways, as a Catholic than as an Anglican."[3]

Nor is the world ignorant as to the causes of these trials and afflictions, in part at least. He has himself told us that there were those whose proceedings upon the occasion of the Vatican Council shocked and dismayed him. Himself holding the infallibility of the Pope as a matter of theological opinion ever since he had become a Catholic,[4] but doubting the opportuneness of its definition, he stood aghast at the virulence displayed by a small and extreme section among the

[1] In his sermon on the "Glories of Mary," *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, p. 359. See also the sermon on the "Fitness of the Glories of Mary" (No. XVIII.), and the "Letter to Dr. Pusey" in vol. ii. of *Anglican Difficulties*.

[2] See *Essay on Development*, chap. ii. § 2, p. 90.

[3] "Letterto the Duke of Norfolk," Postscript, *Anglican Difficulties*, vol. ii. p. 349.

[4] "Letter to the Duke of Norfolk," *ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 304.

advocates of the dominant party. It was a party not dominant which commended itself to his judgment and instincts, not only in theology but also in politics; for the old Laudian notion of the indefeasible divine right of hereditary rulers, and of the absolute passive obedience due to them, had dropped away from him, and had been replaced by the broader doctrine of Aquinas and Suarez. The party of which I speak called itself Liberal. He did not like the name, but he recognized the fact that between the Liberalism against which he had ever warred and the Liberty for which Montalembert and Lacordaire so earnestly contended, there was nothing in common but a sound. With the "general line of thought and conduct" of those illustrious men he "enthusiastically concurred,"[1] and he resented as an outrage the invectives with which they and those who thought with them were so persistently pursued:

"I felt deeply [he wrote], and shall ever feel while life lasts the violence and cruelty of journals and other publications, which, while taking, as they professed to do, the Catholic side, employed themselves by their rash language (though, of course, they did not mean it) in unsettling the weak in faith, throwing back inquirers, and shocking the Protestant mind."[2]

Such language, indeed, ever elicited his strong disapprobation. Thus in another place he observes—

"There are those among us who for years past have conducted themselves as if no responsibility attached to wild

[1] *Apologia*, p. 285.

[2] "Letter to the Duke of Norfolk," *Anglican Difficulties*, vol. ii. p. 300.

words and overbearing deeds: who have stated truths in the most paradoxical form, and stretched principles until they were close upon snapping.[1] There has been a fierce and intolerant temper abroad which scorns and virtually tramples on the little ones of Christ. While I acknowledge one Pope, *jure divino*, I acknowledge no other, and I think it a usurpation too wicked to be comfortably dwelt upon when individuals use their own private judgment in the discussion of religious questions, not simply *abundare in suo sensu*, but for the purpose of anathematizing the private judgment of others."[2]

This "jealous vindication, against tyrannous *ipse dixits*, of the range of truths and the sense of propositions, of which the absolute reception may be required," is among the most marked characteristics of his later writings; and nowhere, perhaps, did he more strongly display it than in dealing with a document so much and so ignorantly talked of, both by Catholics and Protestants, the *Syllabus Errorum*, issued by command of Pope Pius IX. in 1864. Before proceeding to his argument, that this catalogue of errors has in itself no dogmatic force, that it is a mere index *raisonné* the value of which lies in its references, that the aversion felt by educated Europe towards it arises mainly from misinterpretation of the theses condemned, from ignorance of the language of scientific theology, and from the reading of the propositions apart from the context, occasion, and drift of each, he interposes words of indignant protest against "those who wish and try to carry measures, and declare they

[1] "Letter to the Duke of Norfolk," *Anglican Difficulties*, vol. ii. p. 177.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 346.

have carried, when they have not carried them;" and adds the caution, that Pontifical "utterances which are really dogmatic must be read by definite rules and by traditional principles of interpretation, which are as cogent and as unchangeable as the Pope's own decisions themselves." [1]

(VII)

It is not necessary, however, for me to pursue this subject, and I gladly leave unstirred theological dust, now happily fallen, to glance at the bearing of the Tractarian Movement upon another question of far profounder and more general interest; the great question of the day, we must account it, lying as it does at the root of all philosophy: Is any knowledge of God possible?—any knowledge of His existence as a fact?—any knowledge of Him as a Person?—and, if so, how? I need hardly say that to present with any fulness the mind of the author of Tractarianism upon this matter would be an undertaking very far beyond my present limits, involving as it would, with much else, an exposition of his whole doctrine as to certitude and the logical cogency of faith. All I can pretend to do here is to indicate, as briefly as may be consistent with clearness, the outlines of one important branch of his argument; and I shall endeavour to do this, as far as possible, in his own words. His main principle is that which he originally learnt from Butler—that

[1] "Letter to the Duke of Norfolk," § 7, *Anglican Difficulties*, vol. ii. p. 280.

probability is the guide of life. Formal logical sequence, he observes—

"is not, in fact, the method by which we are enabled to become certain of what is concrete, and it is equally plain what the real and necessary method is. It is the cumulation of probabilities, independent of each other, arising out of the nature and circumstances of the particular case which is under review, probabilities too fine to avail separately, too subtle and circuitous to be convertible into syllogisms, too numerous and various for such conversion, even were they convertible." [1]

This, he says,

"is the mode in which we ordinarily reason, dealing with things directly and as they stand, one by one, in the concrete, with an intrinsic and personal power, not a conscious adoption of an artificial instrument or expedient.[2] From the nature of the case, and from the constitution of the human mind, certitude is the result of arguments which, taken in the letter, and not in their full implicit sense, are but probabilities." [3]

And so, in religious inquiries, he holds informal inference to be the real and necessary method. By religion he means the knowledge of God, of His will, and of our duties towards Him; and he finds three main channels which Nature furnishes for acquiring this knowledge, viz. our own minds, the voice of mankind, and the course of the world, the most authoritative of these, as specially our own, being our own minds. To Cardinal Newman our great internal teacher of religion is conscience, a personal guide, which he must use because he must use himself, and nearer to him than any other means of knowledge.[4]

[1] *Grammar of Assent*, p. 281.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 324.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 286.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 389.

He puts away abstract questions; he does not consider "how far external existences are in all cases necessary to the action of the mind, because, in fact, man does not live in isolation, but is everywhere found as a member of society." He deals with no *individuum vagum*, but with man as the experience of life presents him, and with the man he is best acquainted with—himself, because he knows what has satisfied and satisfies himself; if it satisfies him, it is likely to satisfy others; if, as he believes and is sure, it is true, it will approve itself to others also, for there is but one truth.[1] Conscience, then, to him is the voice of God within, "teaching not only that He is, but what He is," "the special Attribute under which it brings Him before us, and to which it subordinates all other Attributes," being "that of justice—retributive justice."

"Hence its effect is to burden and sadden the religious mind, and is in contrast with the enjoyment derivable from the exercise of the affections, and from the perception of beauty, whether in the material universe or in the creations of the intellect. This is that fearful antagonism brought out with such soul-piercing reality by Lucretius, when he speaks so dishonourably of what he considers the heavy yoke of religion, and the "æternas pœnas in morte timendum;" and, on the other hand, rejoices in his *Alma Venus*, "Quæ rerum naturam sola gubernas."[2]

He looks within, then, and he finds, as he believes, that the existence of a God of Judgment is as certain

[1] *Grammar of Assent*, p. 385.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 391.

to him as his own existence, however difficult it may be to put into logical shape the grounds of that certainty. He looks into the world and there he sees a sight that "seems simply to give the lie to this great truth, of which his whole being is so full." "To consider the world," he writes—

"in its length and breadth, its various history, the many races of man, their starts, their fortunes, their mutual alienation, their conflicts; and then their ways, habits, governments, forms of worship, their enterprises, their aimless courses, their random achievements and acquirements, the impotent conclusions of long-standing facts, the tokens so faint and broken of a superintending design, the blind evolution of what turn out to be great powers or truths, the progress of things, as if from unreasoning elements, not towards final causes, the greatness and littleness of man, his far-reaching aims, his short duration, the curtain hung over his futurity, the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary hopeless irreligion, that condition of the whole race, so fearfully yet exactly described in the Apostle's words, 'Having no hope, and without God in the world,'—all this is a vision to dizzy and appal; and inflicts upon the mind the sense of a profound mystery which is absolutely beyond human solution. . . . Were it not for the voice speaking so clearly in my conscience and my heart, I should be an atheist, or a pantheist, or a polytheist, when I looked into the world."[1]

Thus does human life present itself to him. Such is the "heart-piercing, reason-bewildering fact" which he has to face. Is there any explanation of it? "I see only a choice of alternatives," he answers.

[1] *Apologia*, p. 241.

"Either there is no Creator, or He has disowned His creatures. Are, then, the dim shadows of His Presence in the affairs of men but a fancy of our own, or, on the other hand, has He hid His face and the light of His countenance because we have in some special way dishonoured Him? My true informant, my burdened conscience, gives me at once the true answer to each of these antagonistic questions :—it pronounces without any misgiving that God exists :—and it pronounces quite as surely that I am alienated from Him ; that 'His hand is not shortened, but that our iniquities have divided between us and our God.' Thus it solves the world's mystery, and sees in it only a confirmation of its own original teaching."[1]

This, then, is his first step. The presence of God in the conscience, and the sense of alienation from God, are to him the main truths of natural religion—the notorious facts of the case in the medium of his primary mental experiences. And here, before I pass on, I should remark, that, irresistibly as Cardinal Newman finds the doctrine of the existence of God borne in upon him, he must not be supposed to be without a keen consciousness of the number and weight of the objections which may be raised against it—of the insoluble questions, the inconceivable, inexplicable mysteries, which attend it—of the imperfection and incompleteness of the body of proof adducible for it—of the plausible excuses which may be urged for doubting it.[2] He recognizes that "the main difficulty

[1] *Grammar of Assent*, p. 397.

[2] See Sermon on "Mysteries of Nature and Grace" in *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, p. 263. So in *Oxford University Sermons*, p. 194, he remarks, "It is a great question whether Atheism is not as philosophically consistent with the phenomena of the *physical* world, *taken by*

to an inquirer is firmly to hold that there is a Living God, the Creator, Witness, and Judge of men." And he thinks that, when once the mind is broken-in "to the belief of a power above it, when once it understands that it is not itself the measure of all things in heaven and earth, it will have little difficulty in going forward:" not, indeed, that it necessarily must, but that it has passed a line—that "the great obstacle to faith is taken away."[1] The very difficulties of nature, he judges, make it likely that a Revelation should be given.

"That earnest desire which religious minds cherish leads the way to the expectation of it. Those who know nothing of the wounds of the soul are not led to deal with the question, or to consider its circumstances. But when our attention is roused, then the more steadily we dwell upon it, the more probable does it seem that a revelation has been, or will be, given to us. This presentiment is founded on our sense, on the one hand, of the infinite goodness of God, and, on the other, of our extreme misery and need.[2] You know there is a God, yet you know your own ignorance of Him, of His will, of your duties, of your prospects. A revelation would be the greatest of possible boons which could be vouchsafed to you. After all, you do not know, you only conclude, that there is a God; you see Him not, you do but hear of Him. He acts under a veil; He is on the point of manifesting Himself to you at every turn, yet He does not. He has impressed on your heart anticipations of His majesty;

themselves, as the doctrine of a creative and sovereign Power." But see the note in the last edition upon the words in italics. It must not be supposed that Cardinal Newman denies the validity of the argument from design in its place.

[1] *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, p. 276.

[2] *Grammar of Assent*, p. 423.

in every part of creation has He left traces of His presence and given glimpses of His glory; you come up to the spot, He has been there, but He is gone. . . . The news, then, of a revelation, far from suspicious, is borne in upon our hearts by the strongest presumptions of reason in its behalf. It is hard to believe that it is not given, as, indeed, the conduct of mankind has ever shown. You cannot help expecting it from the hands of the All-merciful, unworthy as you feel yourselves of it. It is not that you can claim it, but that He inspires hope of it; it is not you that are worthy of the gift, but it is the gift which is worthy of your Creator. It is so urgently probable, that little evidence is required for it, even though but little were given. Evidence that God has spoken you must have, else were you a prey to impostures; but its extreme likelihood allows you, were it necessary, to dispense with all proof that is not barely sufficient for your purpose. The very fact, I say, that there is a Creator, and a hidden one, powerfully bears you on and sets you down at the very threshold of revelation, and leaves you there looking up earnestly for divine tokens that a revelation has been made."[1]

This is the second stage of his argument. His third point is, If there is a Revelation, where should we seek it? Christianity he considers to be the truest complement of natural religion.[2] But which of its innumerable varieties is the truest form of Christianity? And here comes in the testimony of history. Christianity is a great fact in the world. Its founders set it up as a Church, a Visible Society, a Kingdom. This was their work, not to write a book, nor to put together a collection of documents, the Bible being, in fact, the creation of the Church, and deriving from her sanction an authority the actual extent of which she

[1] *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, pp. 277–279.
[2] *Grammar of Assent*, p. 486.

has never defined. But where is this kingdom which Christ set up, if, indeed, it is still on earth? "If," he argues,

"all that can be found of it is what can be discerned at Constantinople or Canterbury, I say, it has disappeared. . . . We must either give up the belief in the Church as a divine institution altogether, or we must recognize it in that communion of which the Pope is the head. . . . We must take things as they are; to believe in a Church is to believe in the Pope.[1] The question lies between the [Catholic] Church and no divine messenger at all; there is no revelation given us, unless she is the organ of it; for where else is there a Prophet to be found? Your anticipation, which I have been speaking of, has failed, your probability has been falsified, if she be not that Prophet of God. Not that this conclusion is an absurdity, for you cannot take it for granted that your hope of a revelation will be fulfilled; but, in whatever degree it is probable that it will be fulfilled, in that degree it is probable that the Church, and nothing else, is the means of fulfilling it. . . . Turn away from the Catholic Church, and to whom will you go? . . .

"There is nothing between it and scepticism, when men exert their reason freely. Private creeds, fancy religions, may be showy and imposing to the many in their day; national religions may lie huge and lifeless, and cumber the ground for centuries, and distract the attention or confuse the judgment of the learned; but in the long run it will be found that either the Catholic religion is verily and indeed the coming-in of the unseen world into this, or that there is nothing positive, nothing dogmatic, nothing real in any of our notions as to whence we come and whither we are going."[2]

[1] "Letter to the Duke of Norfolk," *Anglican Difficulties*, vol. ii. p. 207.

[2] *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, pp. 279–283.

Such is, in substance, the solution of this great question which commended itself to Cardinal Newman. Of those farthest from accepting it, there are, I think, not a few who will recognize that he has done much to clear the ground, and to present to the world the true issue. And this, perhaps, is the chief significance of Tractarianism.

VIII

CONCERNING GHOST STORIES

(I)

The telling of ghost stories is, I believe, a not uncommon way of honouring the festival of Christ's Nativity, and I resign myself to it, or endeavour to do so, with a good grace, as to one of the inevitable incidents of the holy season, like waits, Christmas-boxes, and pantomimes. I do not, however, make any contribution to the narratives, and possibly my face, less under control than it ought to be, betrays sometimes that they but moderately interest me. At all events, I remember one occasion on which a brilliant lady, who had just finished a thrilling tale, turned to me with a look of surprise, and observed, "You don't seem to care about ghost stories?" I replied, "Well, no; I never tell them, and I would not go out of my way to listen to them; still, I have no wish to mar your innocent—or perhaps not quite innocent—amusement." The lady rejoined, "But surely many ghost stories are quite well authenticated—the one I have just told is; and, if so, what *can* be the harm of telling them?" I thought it best to

follow the example of the Chancellor in *The Day Dream*—a serious discussion would have been out of place just then—"and, smiling, put the question by," promising, however, to write something about it when I should have leisure to do so. And now I proceed to redeem my promise.

The question, indeed, which my fair friend put to me divides itself into two. "Are not many ghost stories true?" and, "If they are, or may be, true, what can be the harm of telling them to beguile an after-dinner hour or to enliven a tea-table?" Let us consider both these questions a little.

(II)

I take the phrase "Ghost Stories" in a large sense, and include in it not merely tales of apparitions, but generally accounts of phenomena not referable to the action of any natural laws at present known, and therefore presumed to belong to the supernatural sphere. Now, that many of these accounts are true I do not for one moment doubt. It is, doubtless, quite easy to deny them upon *a priori* grounds. The affirmation that there is no order beyond the physical, of course implies that there can be no communication from the supernatural. And this is really the argument—to give a classic example—of Voltaire in his article "Apparitions" in the *Philosophical Dictionary*. The first sentence strikes the keynote: "It is not at all an uncommon thing for a person under a strong

emotion to see that which is not." ("Ce n'est point du tout une chose rare qu'une personne, vivement émue, voit ce qui n'est point.") The proposition is unquestionably true. As unquestionably, it is not conclusive. It would be just as true to say, "It is not by any means uncommon for a person in a normal state of health and nerves, and not under the influence of any strong emotion, to be conscious of the presence of one who is dead." The evidence for this second proposition is just as abundant and overwhelming as is the evidence for the first. The *a priori* argument against apparitions of the departed resolves itself into the ancient Roman dictum that "there is nothing beyond death, and that death itself is nothing"—"Post mortem nihil est, ipsaque mors nihil." Of course a man may believe that if he likes. I use the words "if he likes" advisedly, for it is, in nine cases out of ten, our inclination which determines our creed. There are those who, to any form of faith in the supersensuous, prefer a crude disbelief in all that lies out of the senses' grasp. On such, evidence of the supernatural is thrown away. And just now I am not writing for them.

But I suppose that thanatists, as it is the fashion to call them, are really not very numerous. At all events, I will take it that most of those who do me the honour to read this Study will be of the opinion expressed by Cardinal Newman in a striking passage of his sermon "The Invisible World." "The dead, when they depart hence, do not cease to exist, but they retire from this visible scene of things, or, in

other words, they cease to act towards us and before us *through our senses*. . . . They remain; but without the *usual* means of approach towards us and correspondence with us. . . . We are in a world of spirits as well as in a world of sense." To Newman, the phenomenal universe was but a veil, hiding from us spiritual realities. The question is, Can any communication reach us from beyond that veil?

It is a question of fact, and, as I have before observed, the evidence for an affirmative answer to it seems to me overwhelming. I am well aware that this evidence can seldom be tested as evidence is tested in an English court of law. The narrator does not speak, as a rule, under the sanction of an oath or a solemn affirmation. Nor is he, as a rule, subjected to the sifting process of cross-examination. Still, I do not hesitate to say that the testimony upon which many histories of apparitions rest is so clear, so concrete, and so cogent, as to leave no room for doubt in a candid mind—a mind, as the phrase is, open to conviction. "If," Lord Chief Baron Pollock told the jury in the trial of the Mannings—"if the conclusion to which you are led be that there is that degree of certainty in the case that you would act upon it in your own grave and important concerns, that is the degree of certainty which the law requires, and which will justify you in returning a verdict of guilty." That was the degree of certainty which this very learned judge, expounding, I need not say correctly, the doctrine of English jurisprudence, held sufficient for the hanging of the Manning couple.

But the degree of certainty produced by the evidence in support of certain well-known apparitions—for example, the Wynyard-Sherbrooke, the Brougham, and the Weld—appears to me to go far beyond that, and to leave no room for incredulity, except in a mind dominated by a first principle which blocks belief. I may say the same of the account of St. Ambrose falling into a trance during Liturgy, and being seen at the funeral of St. Martin of Tours, and of the apparitions of St. Philip Neri, both during his lifetime and after his decease, to Cardinal Baronius, his friend and disciple.

I have been writing without special reference to the Christian religion. But it must be perfectly clear to any student of its *Sacred Books* that if communications from the unseen world, such as those which we are considering, are impossible, and do *not* take place, these venerable documents lose all claim to credibility, so closely are stories of visions and revelations interwoven with their very texture. We must say the same of the *Lives of the Saints*. And, as regards the more recent Saints, we are often in a position to criticize closely the evidence upon which the alleged supernatural facts rest. In many cases that evidence seems amply sufficient for certitude, unless we discredit it on the *a priori* ground which I mentioned before: as, for example, in the following incident in the life of St. Alphonsus Liguori:—

"On the morning of September 21, 1774, after Alphonsus [he was then Bishop of St. Agatha] had ended Mass, contrary to custom, he threw himself into his armchair; he was cast

down and silent, he made no movement of any sort, never articulated a word, and said nothing to any one. He remained in this state all that day and all the following night, and during all this time he took no nourishment and did not attempt to undress. The servants, on seeing the state he was in, did not know what was going to happen, and remained up and at his door, but no one dared to enter it. On the morning of the 22nd he had not changed his position, and no one knew what to think of it. The fact was that he was in a prolonged ecstasy. However, when the day became further advanced, he rang the bell to announce that he intended to celebrate Mass. The signal was not only answered to by Brother Francis Anthony, according to custom, but all the people in the house hurried to him with eagerness. On seeing so many people, his Lordship asked what was the matter, with an air of surprise. 'What is the matter!' they replied; 'you have neither spoken nor eaten anything for two days, and you ceased to give any signs of life.' 'That is true,' replied Alphonsus; 'but do you not know I have been with the Pope, who has just died?' . . . It was looked upon as a mere dream. . . . However, before very long the tidings of the death of Pope Clement the Fourteenth were received. He passed to a better life on September 22 at seven o'clock in the morning, at the very moment when Alphonsus came to himself."

I should here observe, as in fairness I am bound to do, that well-authenticated stories of this sort are by no means confined to Christian hagiology. Thus, in Eflakī's well-known work, *Menāqibu 'L'Ārifīn*, the Acts of certain Islamite saints of the Mevlevī order of Dervishes, many similar instances of supernatural facts are vouched for by the historian—a man of undoubted intelligence and probity—as seen by himself; while others are related upon the authority of

witnesses whose names are generally given, and whose piety and veracity were known to him.

But the reader must not suppose that narrations of this kind find credence only among the professors of Christianity or Islām. They are received with equal readiness by exponents of the newest schools of philosophy, to whom Christianity, or any of its rival religions, would appear "a creed outworn." Thus Schopenhauer, who, however we may feel towards his speculations, certainly ranks amongst the keenest and subtlest intellects of these latter days, profoundly believed in them, and would not reject even the wildest stories of supernatural manifestations as unworthy of examination. Whether the dead ever *actually* appear he does not indeed undertake to determine; but he will not deny that they may have the capacity of manifesting themselves to, or communicating with, the living. Death, as he judged, though extinguishing the intellect, which, according to him, is merely a function of the brain, has, he considers, no dominion over the will, whereof the brain is only a manifestation. And the fact of apparitions of the living he believed to be established beyond all reasonable doubt. He gives many instances in support of his belief. I have before me, as I write, his most fascinating paper, "An Enquiry concerning Ghost-seeing, and what is connected therewith" ("Versuch über Geistersehen und was damit zusammenhängt"). He observes that belief in ghosts is born with man, that it is found in all ages and in all countries, and that probably no one is altogether

free from it. The great multitude of men, he continues, in all times and in all lands, draw a distinction between natural and supernatural, as two essentially different orders of things, ascribing to the supernatural order miracles, divinations, ghosts, and enchantments, but yet apprehending that nature itself rests upon the supernatural. And this popular differentiation (*Unterscheidung*), he goes on to say, essentially agrees with the Kantian distinction between phenomenon and the thing-in-itself; although Kant regards nature and the supernatural not as two different and separate kinds of being, but as one, which, taken in itself, may be called supernatural, but when manifested in the world of sense, and apprehended by the intellect, and assuming the forms prescribed thereby, is termed nature. What Kant calls phenomenon (*Erscheinung*) Schopenhauer denominates intellectual representation (*Vorstellung*); and Kant's thing-in-itself is named by him Will. In ordinary circumstances, Schopenhauer teaches, we know this Will only as manifested under the forms of space, time, and causality. But there are states of the brain in which we penetrate beyond those forms and come into direct contact with the ultimate, the one reality—Will, transcending the intellectual illusions which are the realm of physical science, and reaching the sphere of absolute truth. To this sphere of absolute truth, curious as it may seem, he refers animal magnetism, sympathetic cures, magic, second sight, presentiments, apparitions, and visions of all kinds.

(III)

But I must not linger further upon these fascinating and far-reaching speculations. That they are Schopenhauer's is enough to entitle them to a respectful hearing. What I have said may suffice as to the first question which I have proposed: the truth, actual or possible, of ghost stories. I shall now proceed to consider the further question—whether, allowing that they may be, and often are, more or less true, the telling them is a harmless amusement. I put the inquiry in this way purposely. I shall answer it in the negative, and shall give my reasons for so doing. I am, of course, very far from saying that all tales of the supernatural, save such as are well authenticated, or vouched for by religion, are necessarily to be reprehended. They may be harmless; nay, more, they may even be, as a recent reverend writer claims, "edifying, ministering to faith and fostering piety." Nor, again, would I venture to affirm that all scientific inquiry regarding supernatural phenomena is in itself reprehensible. I use the word "scientific" in the proper signification. It is generally taken in a too narrow and exclusive sense. In common parlance it is restricted to physics, and to ways of investigation most congruously followed in the domain of physics, but ill-adapted, as a rule, for employment elsewhere. I understand by "science," systematized and co-ordinated knowledge, a knowledge of facts as underlain by principles—in other

words, causal knowledge. And by the scientific method I understand that which the modern mind now so emphatically recognizes and so fruitfully follows as its chosen instrument of research in all departments of intellectual activity—the method which starts, not from *a priori* speculations, but from established facts, and which finds in the comparison of those facts and in the deduction of their results the guarantee of reality. I am far from saying that we may not pursue this method in investigating the supernatural. But I do say that to a science of the supernatural, in the true sense of the word "science," we shall never attain by human industry. However numerous the supernatural phenomena which we collect by observation and verify by experience, we cannot advance to the idea of a law as the explanation of them. The subject is too obscure; the instances are too conflicting and too contradictory; the causal *nexus* is beyond us. Consider the results obtained by the Society for Promoting Psychical Research, for which two valued friends of my own, now no more, Mr. Edmund Gurney and Mr. Frederick Myers, laboured so abundantly. What is the outcome of the investigations of those two highly-disciplined and most accomplished intellects, aided as they were by a multitude of calm, candid, and careful inquirers? Is it other than shadowy, contradictory, illusory, mocking? Yes, mocking; making me think of the laugh which Horace attributes to the Deity when mortal men attempt to overpass the bounds divinely set to human knowledge: "Ridetque si mortalis ultra fas trepidat."

It seems, then, to me that the conclusion to which we are driven, as we meditate on these matters, is that the sphere of the supernatural is beyond the province of earthly science. The veil, lifted though it be at times a very little, conceals from us, and ever will conceal, all effective knowledge of the things beyond it. Mysteries they are, and mysteries they will always remain. They are of the things sung by a loftier poet than Horace—

> "Things not revealed, which the Invisible King
> Only Omniscient hath suppressed in night."

The sphere of our human science is the visible world, in which, for a brief space between two eternities, we labour and suffer, and are glad and sorry, and do good and evil. Clouds and darkness hide from us the whence and whither of humanity. The mystery of generation and the mystery of death are impenetrable to us. Our questionings concerning them, as Voltaire observes not unhappily, are like the questionings of blind men who say to other blind men, "What is light?"

We do not *know* these things, in any real sense. We see them only *per speculum et in enigmate*, "through a glass darkly," and surely the inference for those who believe in a Divine ordering of the world is, that this is best for us. The curiosity of man is insatiable. It is not always wise. There are things as to which it is better not satisfied. To quote the weighty words of Cardinal Newman, in his sermon on "Ignorance of Evil:" "There is knowledge which is forbidden, unlawful, hurtful, unprofitable. Now this,"

he continues, "seems very strange to the men of this day. The only forbidden subjects which they can fancy are such as are not *true* . . . Falsehood they think wrong . . . *because* false. But they are perplexed when told that there may be branches of real knowledge, yet forbidden. Yet it has ever been considered in the Church, as in Scripture, that soothsaying, consulting the stars, magic, and similar arts are unlawful—unlawful even though not false." Why unlawful? Because rash intrusions into the Secret of the King; by-paths to things beyond flesh and blood, and so avenues to ill, not to good; leading not to sane and safe knowledge, but to bewilderment, illusion, and despair. I add that what Macaulay calls, in one of his most striking pages, "a longing to pry into the mysteries of the grave," is a token of intellectual and spiritual decay. So was it with the unhappy Spanish monarch whose visit to the royal tombs under the Church of the Escurial he has pictured with all the power of his vivid rhetoric. So was it in the decadent days of Imperial Rome, when the general mind was dominated by the belief that man could hold intercourse, by means of spells, charms, and incantations, with spirits of greater might and knowledge than his own, and could compel the souls of the departed to reveal the secrets of their prison-house; when divination, as Cicero testifies, "lay like a heavy burden upon the minds of men, so that even sleep, which should be a refuge from anxiety, became, through the interpretation of dreams, the source of a vast brood of cares." And surely, in our own age, the

same ugly symptoms are not wanting. In the discredit of ancient beliefs, in the dissolution of traditional morality, in the eclipse of the "mighty hopes which make us men," there are many who seek some token from the invisible world by means not unlike those antique expedients. The quest is vain. No sane word comes from beyond the veil to testify what is there. As of old, there is but a "hideous hum in words deceiving."

Unquestionably, as Newman says, the Catholic Church, throughout the ages, has sternly set her face against practices such as these, and here, as elsewhere, has made profit of the gift which even her bitterest foes credit her with—a singular practical sagacity, a marvellous knowledge of what is in man. We must remember that, according to her teaching, the denizens of the invisible world by which we are encompassed, are not all the friends of God and man; that evil spirits, as well as good angels, surround us; and that, if an apparition of the dead (to speak only of that) does occur, it may be due not to the powers of good, but to the powers of evil; that it may indeed have for its object to instruct, to console, to correct the living or to obtain prayers for the departed; but that, on the contrary, it may come to deceive or tempt those whom, in the inscrutable counsels of the Creator and Judge of men, maleficent spirits are permitted to assail. Such is the teaching of the Catholic Church, and, whether or no we accept it, the subject is surely too full of sacred awe and solemn mystery to be prostituted to a topic for idle talking. A learned correspondent

of mine correctly points out that the custom of telling ghost stories at Yule is purely heathenish, an unfit survival from the Teutobergian forest, a custom clearly inconsistent with the attitude prescribed, alike by reason and religion, towards the departed—"Requiescant in pace," as touching the good, and for the evil, "Non ragioniam di lor." And perhaps I cannot better conclude this brief discussion than with the words of one of the most distinguished of living Catholic Bishops, whom I have consulted on the subject of it, and who kindly allows me to quote from what he has written to me; words which, at all events, will carry weight with members of his own communion: "I have always thought Catholics too heedless or too lax about telling ghost stories and discussing ghosts and apparitions. The Catholic spirit is (1) to accept no apparition except on serious and valid evidence; (2) to consider that the apparitions which favour a false religion, or which incite to pride or indifference, or which tend to weaken lawful authority, or to give an untrue idea of the state of spirits in the world to come, or which are trivial, unbecoming, or ludicrous, are certainly (if authentic) the work of demons, and must be abhorred by all Catholics; (3) seeing that the great majority of ghost stories are either idle tales or are unworthy and misleading as regards religion, a Catholic should avoid countenancing them."

IX

THE THEORY OF THE LUDICROUS

(I)

JUST a year ago I had the honour of delivering in this place four Lectures, having for their subject four English humourists whom I considered specially representative of the nineteenth century, namely, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, and Carlyle. In my first Lecture I gave a definition of the word "humourist," as I understand it: an artist who playfully gives us his intuition of the world and of human life. The definition, which was the result of a good deal of reflection, I believed, and still believe, to be accurate. But it did not appear to find universal acceptation. Nor was it universally allowed that the four eminent writers whom I have mentioned could be regarded as humourists. Thus, a very accomplished friend, of great literary distinction, and specially entitled to speak on such a subject, wrote to me as follows :—

"It would doubtless be interesting to trace an element of

[1] This Lecture, delivered at the Royal Institution on the evening of Friday, March 13, 1895, was printed from the shorthand writer's report, with corrections and additions.

humour in all these four writers, and to show how it gives them a certain affinity. I doubt, though, whether that could be done. But to say that they are all first and foremost humourists seems to me—forgive the word—absurd. I doubt whether Dickens was a humourist at all. Thackeray was doubtless a humourist; but it seems to me the one point which distinguishes him from Dickens. George Eliot's genius was marred from first to last by the invincible pedantry of the superior person, which prevented her real force of feeling and tragic power from catching more than one phase at a time, and so prevented her from being, in any sense of the word, a great humourist. As for Carlyle, whether he is a humourist or not, you certainly adduce no instance of it."

I replied to my friend that a passage in one of Carlyle's *Essays*, which I had quoted in my Lecture on him—the well-known passage about Balaam the son of Beor—appeared to me to indicate the high-water mark, so to speak, of British humour in this nineteenth century; and that if his perusal of that author, of George Eliot, and of Dickens, did not satisfy him that they were humourists, I feared no arguments of mine would lead him so to regard them.

I have referred to this friendly encounter, upon the present occasion, because it came to my mind when the invitation of the Managers of the Royal Institution to speak here to-night reached me. And as I thought about it, I resolved to devote the hour which has been put into my hands to a discussion of that larger question whereof this of humour forms part—the question of the Ludicrous.

(II)

A large question it is, indeed, comprehending as it does all that appeals to what I may, with sufficient accuracy for my present purpose, call the sportive side of human nature; or, as the Germans would say, all that relates to the *Spieltrieb* in man. The feelings aroused by the perception of the Beautiful and the Sublime, are referred, by modern writers on psychology, to the domain of what Kant has taught us to call the Æsthetic. It seems to be pretty generally allowed that the Beautiful attracts without repelling, and affects us with unmingled pleasure in the free exercise of our cognitive faculties; while the feeling of the Sublime is mixed of pleasure and pain, involving, as it does, fear and awe, as well as admiration. Regarding the Ludicrous there is much less agreement, and few modern psychologists appear to have made it the subject of profound or far-reaching studies. That is one reason why I have chosen it as my topic to-night. Now, in dealing with the Ludicrous, the first thing to be remembered is its vast extent. I know not who has better brought this out than Isaac Barrow, in a passage which is, I suppose, the *locus classicus* on the subject, and which I think I shall do well to read:—

"But first, it may be demanded what the thing we speak of is, or what this facetiousness doth import? To which question I might reply as Democritus did to him that asked the definition of a man, *It is that which we all see and know:* any one better apprehends what it is by acquaintance than I

can inform him by description. It is indeed a thing so versatile and multiform, appearing in so many shapes, so many postures, so many garbs, so variously apprehended by several eyes and judgments, that it seemeth no less hard to settle a clear and certain notion thereof, than to make a portrait of Proteus, or to define the figure of the fleeting air. Sometimes it lieth in pat allusion to a known story, or in seasonable application of a trivial saying, or in forging an apposite tale: sometimes it playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense or the affinity of their sound: sometimes it is wrapped in a dress of humourous expression: sometimes it lurketh under a similitude: sometimes it is lodged in a sly question, in a smart answer, in a quirkish reason, in a shrewd intimation, in cunningly diverting, or cleverly retorting an objection: sometimes it is couched in a bold scheme of speech, in a tart irony, in a lusty hyperbole, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of contradictions, or an acute nonsense: sometimes a scenical representation of persons or things, a counterfeit spèech, a mimical look or gesture passeth for it: sometimes an affected simplicity, sometimes a presumptuous bluntness giveth it being: sometimes it riseth from a lucky hitting upon what is strange, sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious matter to the purpose: often it consisteth in one knows not what, and springeth up one can hardly tell how. Its ways are unaccountable, being answerable to the numberless rovings of fancy and windings of language. It is, in short, a manner of speaking out of the simple and plain way (such as reason teacheth and proveth things by) which by a pretty surprising uncouthness in conceit or expression, doth affect and amuse the fancy, stirring in it some wonder, and breeding some delight thereto."

That seems to me a very fine bit of English. Dr. McCosh is, I think, well warranted when in his book on *The Emotions* he pronounces it, both in respect of thought and feeling, one of the most comprehensive

passages in our language. And now let us look a little at the varieties of the Ludicrous included in it, as that will help us, perhaps, to the theory of which we are in quest. I have thought that it would be well to catalogue them—a thing, so far as I am aware, not previously attempted. My catalogue, which reduces them to twenty headings, is as follows :—

1. Humour.
2. Wit.
3. Irony.
4. Satire.
5. Sarcasm.
6. Parody.
7. Bulls.
8. Puns.
9. Banter.
10. Caricature.
11. Buffoonery.
12. Mimicry.
13. The Comical.
14. The Farcical.
15. The Burlesque.
16. The Grotesque.
17. Alliteration.
18. Conundrums.
19. Charades.
20. Practical Joking.

Now, I am far from asserting that this catalogue is exhaustive, although I have taken a great deal of pains with it, and cannot call to mind any instance of the Ludicrous that may not be brought under one or another of its twenty headings; which, I may observe, are, so to speak, mere finger-posts for guidance in a vast and ill-explored country. Most of them seem so plain and intelligible as to require no discussion. We all know, for instance, what Puns, Charades, and Conundrums are. We all know, or may know with a little reflection, what is properly meant by Sarcasm, Banter, Caricature. But there are four varieties of the Ludicrous which seem to present special difficulties. And upon these I must offer a few remarks.

(III)

First, then, in this catalogue of mine stands Humour, which seems to me beyond question the highest manifestation of the Ludicrous. And I do not think we can have a better account of Humour than one given by an admirable writer to whom some of us had the pleasure of listening in this place yesterday afternoon. "That spirit of playing with the vain world and all that therein is familiar to Socrates, which is always more or less discernible in the highest natures."[1] The question is often asked, What is the difference between Humour and Wit? A great many different answers have been given, one of the least satisfactory of them, as it seems to me, being in Sidney Smith's *Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, which he delivered here ninety years ago. I shall return to that presently. For myself I would say, borrowing from the German a distinction now pretty familiar to cultivated people throughout the world, that Wit specially implies Understanding—*Verstand*—while Humour has most in common with Reason—*Vernunft*—in which there is always an element—latent, it may be—of tragedy. The greatest humourist in Shakespeare is the melancholy Jacques. And here I am reminded of some words of that most accomplished critic, the late Mr. Walter Pater. In his Essay on Charles Lamb he characterizes Wit as "that unreal and transitory mirth which is as

[1] The Rev. William Barry, D.D.

the crackling of thorns under a pot," and Humour as "the laughter which blends with tears, and even with the subtleties of the imagination, and which, in its most exquisite motives, is one with pity—the laughter of the Comedies of Shakespeare, hardly less expressive than his moods of seriousness or solemnity of that deeply stirred soul of sympathy in him, as flowing from which both tears and laughter are alike genuine and contagious." This is, I think, true as regards Humour, although it hardly does justice to Wit. What Sydney Smith says in his *Lectures* about Wit and Humour appears to me most unsatisfactory, which is the more surprising since he himself was doubtless one of the wittiest of his generation. Humour, he tells us, consists in "discovering incongruity between ideas which excite surprise, and surprise alone." It is a surprising proposition; but, at all events, it becomes intelligible when we see what it is that he means by Humour. He gives three instances: A young officer of eighteen years of age coming into company in full uniform, but with a wig on his head, such as was worn at the beginning of this century by grave and respectable clergymen, advanced in years; a corpulent and respectable tradesman, with habiliments somewhat ostentatious, sliding down gently into the mud, and de-decorating a pea-green coat; and the overturning of a very large dinner-table with all the dinner upon it. But these do not appear to me to be examples of Humour at all. My old friend, Dr. Kennedy, for many years Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge, a very dignified and correct person, was dining in the hall of one of the

colleges of that University upon some festive occasion, and found himself next to a well-known joker, whose facetiousness, never very refined, grew coarser and coarser as the banquet proceeded, while the Doctor's face grew glummer and glummer. At last the funny man said, "You seem to have no taste for humour, Professor." "Sir," replied the Doctor, much in wrath, "I have a taste for humour, but I have no taste for low buffoonery." Well, what Sydney Smith gives as his first instance of Humour appears to me—to use Dr. Kennedy's expression—low buffoonery; his other two instances I should refer to the category of the Comical. As little can I accept Sydney Smith's account of Wit. "It discovers," he tells us, "real relations that are not apparent between ideas exciting surprise, and surprise only." Surely this will not stand. Consider, for example, the lines of Pope—Hazlitt judged them the finest piece of Wit he knew—on the Lord Mayor's Show, and the Lord Mayor's Poet Laureate—

> "Now, night descending, the proud show is o'er;
> But lives in Settle's numbers one day more."

What discovery is there here of real but not apparent relations between ideas producing surprise, and surprise only? Or take the lines—far wittier, I think, than these—of Pope's Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot. He is speaking of certain bad poets—

> "He who still wanting, though he lives on theft,
> Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing left;
> And he who now to sense, now nonsense leaning,
> Means not, but blunders round about a meaning;
> And he whose fustian's so sublimely bad,
> It is not poetry but prose run mad."

Surely the Wit here does not lend itself to Sydney Smith's explanation. But, as I have ventured thus to criticize this highly gifted man's definition of Wit, perhaps I ought to offer for your criticism a definition of my own. I should say, then, that Wit consists in the discovery of incongruities in the province of the understanding (*Verstand*), the distinctive element which it leaves out, being the element of *Vernunft*.

I am equally dissatisfied with Sydney Smith's account of another variety of the Ludicrous, namely, the Bull. "A Bull," he tells us, "is the exact counterpart of a Witticism, for as Wit discovers real relations that are not apparent, Bulls admit apparent relations that are not real." I do not think Bulls necessarily do that. When Sir Boyle Roche told the Irish House of Commons that he wished a certain bill, then before that assembly, at the bottom of the bottomless pit, he certainly produced a Bull, and a very fine one; but as certainly his aspiration does not admit apparent relations that are not real. It appears to me that a Bull may perhaps be defined—in so difficult and subtle a matter I don't like to dogmatize—as a contradiction in terms which conveys a real meaning. I observe in passing—and I hope I may not in so doing seem to be lacking in justice to Ireland—that the claim sometimes made on behalf of that country to a sort of monopoly of Bulls is untenable. Excellent Bulls are produced by people of other countries, as, for example, by an Austrian officer, mentioned by Schopenhauer, when he observed to a guest staying in the same country house, "Ah, you are fond of solitary walks; so

am I; let us take a walk together." Or by the Scotchman who told a friend that a common acquaintance had declared him unworthy to black the boots of a certain person, and who in reply to his remark, "Well, I hope you took my part," said, "Of course I did. I said you were quite worthy to black them." Or, again, by a well-known English judge, who, when passing sentence on a prisoner convicted on all the counts of a long indictment, observed, "Do you know, sir, that it is in my power to sentence you, for these many breaches of the laws of your country, to a term of penal servitude far exceeding your natural life?"

There is yet another variety of the Ludicrous upon which I should like to say a few words—Parody. A Parody is a composition which sportively imitates some other composition. I suppose that, in the majority of cases, the object, or, at all events, the effect of the imitation, is to cast a certain amount of ridicule upon the original. "What should be great you turn to farce," complains the honest farmer to his wife, in Prior's amusing poem, *The Ladle*. Well, it must be confessed that this is what a Parody too often does. But this need not be so. A Parody must necessarily be sportive, or it would not belong to the great family of the Ludicrous; but the laughter, or the smile, which it raises need not be at the expense of the composition imitated. Pope speaks of his imitation of one of the *Satires* of Horace as a Parody: but the laugh which he raises does not fall upon Horace. So, you will remember, in the *Dunciad* he most effectively parodies certain noble lines of

Denham's *Cooper's Hill*, lines addressed by that poet to the river Thames :—

> "O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
> My great example, as it is my theme!
> Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull,
> Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full."

Fine verses, indeed, are these: possibly the finest example of that strength with which Pope, in a well-known line, rightly credits Denham. And, assuredly, Pope by no means intended to ridicule them, when he addressed the unhappy Welsted :—

> "Flow Welsted, flow, like thine inspired Beer,
> Though stale, not ripe; though thin, yet never clear;
> So sweetly mawkish and so smoothly dull,
> Heady, not strong; overflowing, yet not full."

I think, perhaps, the finest Parody I know, is Clough's *New Decalogue*—

> "Thou shalt have only one God; who
> Would be at the expense of two?
> No graven image may be
> Worshipped, except the currency.
> Swear not at all, for, for thy curse,
> Thine enemy is none the worse.
> At church on Sundays to attend
> Will serve to keep the world thy friend.
> Honour thy parents, that is, all
> From whom advancement may befall.
> Thou shalt not kill; but need not strive,
> Officiously, to keep alive."

And so forth.

Now, Clough's intention in these mordant lines assuredly was not to cast ridicule upon the *Ten*

Commandments. No: his ridicule was directed to the false religionism which honours them with its lips, but, in its heart, is far from them.

(IV)

So much must suffice regarding the four varieties of the Ludicrous, which seem to me to present special difficulties. What I have said may serve to show how wide and varied its range is, and how many things have to be thought of, and taken into account, before we can even attempt to frame a theory of it.

But, indeed, that is not all. The matter is further complicated by national differences. This is especially so in the case of humour. Spanish humour, for example—its chief monument is, of course, *Don Quixote*—differs very widely from all other. It is impossible to conceive of that marvellous book as being written out of Spain, not merely on account of its local colouring, but also, and far more, on account of its ethos, its *indoles*. Pope, in dedicating to Swift the *Dunciad*, writes—

> "Whether thou choose Cervantes' serious air,
> Or laugh and shake in Rabelais' easy chair."

The lines are singularly infelicitous. The Castilian gravity of Cervantes is one thing. The British gravity of Swift is quite another. Nor is there much in common between Rabelais and Swift. Rabelais is the supreme example of what Renan has called "the

old Gallic gaiety"—it seems now well-nigh extinct in France—in its moods of wildest and most unrestrained extravagance. Swift, "bitter and strange," is ever sober, ever holds himself in hand. Rabelais! Yes: we picture him to ourselves in his easy-chair, laughing consumedly, quaffing his cup of good old wine to warm his good old nose, and ministered to, like Falstaff, "by a fair hot wench in a flame-coloured taffeta." Swift's most outrageous utterances are delivered with all the solemnity—I think this has been remarked by Taine—of a clergyman discoursing in his gown and bands. I can only glance at this subject of the difference in the humour of different races. It is too large, and would want a Lecture, or rather a book, to itself, for any adequate treatment. But, before I pass on, I should like to observe how American humour is distinctly a thing *sui generis*. It is, I think, the only intellectual province in which the people of the United States have achieved originality. I cannot here enter upon an analytical and comparative examination of it. I suppose its peculiar charm lies in its homely and fresh grotesqueness. The dryness and crispness of the American climate seem to have passed into it. Lowell is unquestionably one of its chief masters.

> "Parson Wilbur sez he never heerd in his life,
> That th' Apostles rigged out in their swaller-tail coats
> And marched round in front of a drum and a fife
> To git, some of 'em office and some of 'em votes,
> But John P
> Robinson, he
> Sez they didn't know everything down in Judee."

Artemus Ward, another great master of American humour, has not surpassed this. But, I think, he has equalled it: as, for example, in his account of his visit to Brigham Young:—

"'You are a married man, Mr. Young, I believe,' says I, preparing to write him some free parsis.

"'I've eighty wives, Mr. Ward. I sertinly am married.'

"'How do you like it as far as you hev got?' said I.

"He said, 'Middlin'.'"

But the American newspapers, even the humblest of them, constantly contain things just as good as this. A correspondent the other day sent me some obscure journal, published in the far West, I think, wherein I found a story which strikes me as so superlatively good a specimen of American humour that I shall venture to read it to you. It is called, *A Cool Burglar, too.*

"'I think about the most curious man I ever met,' said the retired burglar, 'I met in a house in Eastern Connecticut, and I shouldn't know him either if I should meet him again, unless I should hear him speak; it was so dark where I met him that I never saw him at all. I had looked around the house downstairs, and actually hadn't seen a thing worth carrying off, and it wasn't a bad-looking house on the outside, either. I got upstairs, and groped about a little, and finally turned into a room that was darker than Egypt. I hadn't gone more than three steps in this room when I heard a man say, "Hello, there!"

"'"Hello!" says I.

"'"Who are you?" said the man; "burglar?"

"'And I said Yes, I did do something in that line occasionally.

"'"Miserable business to be in, ain't it?" said the man. His voice came from a bed over in the corner of the room, and I knew he hadn't even sat up.

"'And I said, "Well, I dunno; I've got to support my family someway."

"'"Well, you've just wasted a night here," said the man. "Didn't you see anything downstairs worth stealing?"

"'And I said no, I hadn't.

"'"Well, there's less upstairs," says the man; and then I heard him turn over and settle down to go to sleep again. I'd like to have gone over there and kicked him. But I didn't. It was getting late, and I thought, all things considered, that I might just as well let him have his sleep out.'"

(V)

And now having thus taken, so to speak, a bird's-eye view of the vast domain of the Ludicrous, let us go on to inquire if we can arrive at any true theory about it. Can we define the Ludicrous? Is there a Ludicrous in the nature of things—an Objective Ludicrous, as well as a Subjective Ludicrous? In other words, what is the Ludicrous in itself, and what is it to us? And what is the faculty which comprehends and judges the Ludicrous? These are questions which confront us when we seek to deal with the matter philosophically. And they are questions which it is far easier to ask than to answer. Plato, in the *Philebus*, tells us "the pleasure of the Ludicrous springs from the sight of another's misfortune, the misfortune, however, being a kind of self-ignorance that is powerless to inflict hurt." A certain

spice of malice, you see, he held to be of the essence of this emotion. Well, that may be so. It is always perilous to differ from Plato. But certainly his account is inadequate, as, indeed, is now pretty generally allowed. Far profounder is the view expounded by Aristotle, here, as in so many provinces, "the master of them that know." "The Ludicrous," he tells us in *The Poetics*, "is a defect of some sort (ἁμάρτημά τι) and an ugliness (αἶσχος), which is not painful or destructive." These are words which, at first, may not seem very enlightening. But, as Professor Butcher admirably remarks, in his edition of *The Poetics*, we cannot properly understand them without taking into account the elements which enter into Aristotle's idea of beauty. And when we have done that, we shall find that we may extend their meaning so as to embrace "the incongruities, absurdities, or cross purposes of life, its imperfect correspondences or adjustments, and that in matters intellectual as well as moral." Aristotle's view of the Ludicrous appears to be, in fact, something out of time and place without danger, some want in truth and propriety which is neither painful nor pernicious. The treatment of the Ludicrous by the Schoolmen is worth noting, as indeed is their treatment of every question to which they have applied their acute and subtle intellects. Their philosophy goes upon Plato's notion of ideals or patterns in the Divine mind, compared with which individuals, both in themselves and in their relations with one another, fall short of perfection. This deficiency, they teach, when not grave enough to

excite disgust or indignation, is the ground—the *fundamentum reale*—of our subjective perception of the Ludicrous. I believe I have looked into most of the modern philosophers who have dealt with this matter, and I do not think that, with one exception—to be presently dwelt upon—they take us much beyond the Ancients and the Schoolmen. Of course, we have attained to a clearer perception of its physical side. And here we are indebted to Mr. Herbert Spencer for an explanation, which, so far as I can judge—and that is not very far—is probably true. This is the substance of it: "A large amount of nervous energy, instead of being allowed to expend itself in producing an equivalent amount of the new thoughts and emotions which were nascent, is suddenly checked in its flow." "The excess must discharge itself in some other direction, and there results an efflux through the motor nerves to various classes of the muscles, producing the half-convulsive actions we term laughter." I dare say Mr. Spencer may be right in the hypothesis he here presents. But I am sure he is wrong if he supposes that those "nervous discharges" of which he speaks, are the primary or the main element in the emotion of which laughter is an outward visible sign. That emotion begins with a mental act. As Lotze well puts it in his *Microcosmos*, "The mechanism of our life has annexed the corporeal expression to a mood of mind produced by what we see being taken up into a world of thought, and estimated at the value belonging to it in the rational connection of things." Of course, the corporeal

expression is not *necessarily* connected with the mood of mind. The physical phenomenon which we call laughter may be produced by purely physical means, for example, by titillation. The laugh of the soul and the laugh of the body are distinct. We may have either without the other. And only a gross and superficial analysis will confound them.

But, as I intimated just now, there is one modern philosopher who appears to me to have given us a satisfactory formula of the Ludicrous. That philosopher is Schopenhauer, unquestionably one of the most profound and penetrating intellects of this century, however we may account of his system as a whole. One of his cardinal doctrines is that all abstract knowledge springs from knowledge of perception, and obtains its whole value from its relation to perception. And upon this doctrine he hangs his theory of the Ludicrous. "The source of the Ludicrous," he teaches, "is always the paradoxical, and therefore unexpected, subsumption of an object under a conception which in other respects is different from it." Or, as he, elsewhere in his great work, writes more at large—

"The cause of laughter, in every case, is simply the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept and the real objects, which by means of it we have thought in a certain association, and laughter itself is the expression of this incongruity. Now, incongruity occurs in this way: we have thought of two or more real objects by means of one concept, and have passed on the identity of the concept to the objects. It then becomes strikingly apparent, from the discrepancy of

the objects in other respects, that the concept applies to them only from one point of view. It occurs quite as often, however, that the incongruity between a single real object and the concept under which from one point of view, it has rightly been subsumed, is suddenly felt. Now, the more correct the subsumption of such objects under a concept may be from one point of view, and the greater and more glaring their incongruity from another point of view, the stronger is the ludicrous effect which is produced by this contrast. All laughter, therefore, springs up on occasion of a paradoxical and unexpected subsumption, whether this is expressed in words or actions."

Now, I believe this account to be, in the main, correct. It is, in substance, the thought of Aristotle, but it brings in the element of paradox, unexpectedness, suddenness, which is lacking in that philosopher's definition. And it is cast into an accurate and scientific form. "The source of the Ludicrous is always the paradoxical, and therefore unexpected, subsumption of an object under a conception which, in other respects, is different from it." Yes; I think that this is true. Every instance of the Ludicrous, in its twenty varieties which I have been able to call to mind, fits in with this formula. But there are two points in Schopenhauer's exposition to which I must demur. In the first place, I do not think him well warranted in affirming—as he does—that his theory of the Ludicrous is inseparable from his particular doctrine of perception and abstract ideas. And therefore it is not necessary for me, on the present occasion, to enter upon an examination of that doctrine; of which I am heartily glad; for to do so, even in

briefest outline, would take up far more time than is left of my hour. Besides, I hate talking metaphysics after dinner, and I fancy very few people really like hearing metaphysics talked at that period of the day —or perhaps at any other! Again, Schopenhauer certainly uses unguarded and too general language when he tells us that *all* laughter is occasioned by the paradoxical, and therefore unexpected, subsumption of an object under a conception which in other respects is different from it. The phenomenon of laughter may be due to a variety of causes. It may be due to merely physical causes, as I pointed out just now. It may be due to quite other mental causes than paradoxical and unexpected subsumption. Paradoxical and unexpected subsumption is not the explanation of the heavenly laughter of which Dante speaks in the twenty-seventh canto of the *Paradiso*—the laughter of Beatrice, "so gladsome that in her countenance God Himself appeared to rejoice."

> "Ma ella che vedeva il mio disire
> Incominciò, ridendo, tanto lieta
> Che Dio parea nel suo volto gioire."

It is not the explanation of what is called fiendish laughter—laughter *propter malitiam*, the outcome of mere malice—the sort of laughter which, by the way, one of his critics has attributed to Schopenhauer himself, the laugh of a demon over the fiasco of the universe. It is not the explanation of that ringing laugh of pure human happiness which one sometimes hears from the lips of young girls; is there any music like it? They laugh as the birds sing. Nor is the

laughter of women at their lovers—a common phenomenon enough—always to be referred to the paradoxical, and therefore unexpected, subsumption of an object under a conception which in other respects is different from it. It is far oftener the expression of mere triumph. "The outburst of laughter," Dr. Bain truly tells us in his *Mental and Moral Science*, "is a frequent accompaniment of the emotion of power." But it is sometimes a manifestation of pain too deep for tears. This is the laughter of which Antigone speaks: Ἀλγοῦσα μὲν δῆτ' εἰ γέλωτ' ἐν σοὶ γελῶ: "I laugh in sorrow, if I laugh at thee." That laugh of sorrow—so piercing and pathetic! who does not know it? Surely it is the saddest thing in the world.

Lastly, not to continue unduly the enumeration, laughter is very often the expression of mere mental vacuity. I remember a gentleman who was fond of relating utterly imbecile stories concerning himself, the invariable ending of them being, "And then I roared." We gave him the name of the Roarer, and fled at his approach as we would have done from a ramping and roaring lion. But I am quite sure his laughter was not due to the paradoxical, and therefore unexpected, subsumption of an object under a conception which in other respects was different from it. No; his was the inane laughter which Cicero justly calls the most inane thing in the world. "Inani risu nihil est inanius."

(VI)

With these reservations, then, I think we must admit Schopenhauer's theory of the Ludicrous. It is true as far as it goes. I use these words of limitation, because it does not attempt to answer those deeper questions connected with the subject which I mentioned just now. Perhaps they are unanswerable. Certainly the few minutes left to me will not suffice, even for the most superficial examination of them. I would rather employ those minutes for another and more practical purpose: an Englishman is nothing if not practical. We have seen what the Ludicrous is: the paradoxical, and therefore unexpected, subsumption of an object under a conception which in other respects is different from it. Well, but what is the function of the Ludicrous in human life? What end does it serve? Please note that this question is quite congruous with the title of my Lecture: for, in order really to know anything, we must know its end: according to that profound saying of Aristotle, *ἡ δὲ φύσις τέλος ἐστί.*

I observe, then, that a sense of the Ludicrous is the most sane thing we have. Incorrectness and abnormality are the notes of the Ludicrous. And, they provoke one to affirm—*ridentem dicere verum*—what is correct and normal. We may say then, that the Ludicrous is an irrational negative which arouses in the mind a rational affirmation. And so, in strictness, a sense of the Ludicrous cannot be attributed to animals less highly evolved than man in the scale of being:

because, though they have understanding, they have not, properly speaking, reason; they have knowledge of perception; they have not abstract knowledge. Still, in this province, as elsewhere, we may observe amongst them what Aristotle calls μιμήτα τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ζωῆς: mimicries of the life of man. As in the most favoured individuals of the higher species of them there appear analoga of the operations of reason, so do we find also indications of the lower kinds of the Ludicrous: farce, buffoonery, practical joking. But, indeed, there appear to be whole races of men—the North American Indians[1] and the Cingalese Veddas, for example—that are destitute of the sense of the Ludicrous. And in the higher races this sense is, by no means, universally found. The richest intellects possess it in amplest measure. The absence of it is a sure indication of mental poverty. "Here comes a fool: let's be grave," said Charles Lamb upon one occasion. And, I remember a friend of my own observing of a somewhat taciturn person whom we had met, "He must be a man of sense, for, although he said little, he laughed in the right place." That laugh is a manifestation of intellectual abundance or exuberance: it is something over and above the actual work of life. And, so we may adopt for our present purpose certain words of Schiller's in his *Letters on Æsthetic Education:* "Man sports (*spielt*) only when he is Man in the full signification of the word: and then only is he complete man (*ganz Mensch*) when he sports."

I need hardly observe how grossly this faculty of

[1] But see the letter appended to this Lecture.

the Ludicrous may be abused. There is nothing more diabolical—in the strictest sense of the word—than to turn into ridicule "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report." There is no more detestable occupation than that of "sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer." But it is a maxim of jurisprudence, "Abusus non tollit usum." And this is universally true. No; the abuse of the Ludicrous does not take away its uses. Those proper, healthy, and legitimate uses are obvious. And very few words will suffice for such of them as I can here touch on. Now, one office of the Ludicrous is to lighten "the burden and the mystery of all this unintelligible world." Beaumarchais has indicated it in his well-known saying: "I make haste to laugh at everything, for fear of being obliged to weep." Samuel Rogers used to tell a story of Lord Shelburne —who, it seems, could say the most provoking things with the most innocent air—remarking upon one occasion, in a speech, that Lord Carlisle had written a comedy. "A comedy!" that peer interrupted; "no, it is a tragedy." "I beg the noble lord's pardon," Shelburne replied, "I thought it was a comedy." Well, "life's poor play" is tragedy or comedy, as you take it. It is best not to take it as tragedy, at all events too habitually. A certain novelist, I forget who, says of a certain lady, I forget her name, who adorns his pages, that on a certain occasion, I forget what, "not knowing whether to laugh or cry, she chose the better part and laughed." It *is* the better

part. And one office of humour—to speak only of that variety of the Ludicrous—is to show us the folly of quarrelling with such life as we have here. Ah, it is so easy to strip off the illusions of human existence! And so foolish! Yes; and, may we not add, so ungrateful? For assuredly, the Almighty hand which has hung the veil of Mâya over the darker realities of life, was impelled by pity for the "purblind race of miserable man." Illusions! what would the world be without them? And it is the function of the humourist to teach us to enjoy them wisely; to lead us to make the most of life's poor play, while it lasts, which assuredly we shall not do if we are for ever examining too curiously the tinsel and tawdry which deck it out, if we are ever thinking of the final drop of the curtain upon "the painted simulation of the scene" and the extinguishment of the lights for ever. *Memento mori* is undoubtedly a most wholesome maxim. So is *Disce vivere.* "Ah, mon enfant," said the old priest, touching lightly with his withered hand the blooming cheek of the young girl, too vain of her pretty face, "Ah, mon enfant, tout cela pourrira." "Oui, mon père," she replied naïvely, "mais ce n'est pas encore pourri." Well, they were both right, the sage confessor and the silly coquette. And we may learn a lesson from them both. There is an admirable saying of Joubert, "L'illusion et la sagesse réunies sont le charme de la vie et de l'art."

But again, the Ludicrous has a distinct ethical value. Aristotle places εὐτραπελία among the virtues, and by εὐτραπελία he means decorous wit and humour,

as distinguished from the low buffoonery to which Dr. Kennedy so strongly objected. It is said that ridicule is the test of truth. And there is a true sense in the saying. The Platonic irony—which is really the feigning of ignorance in order to get a man to make a fool of himself—may illustrate this. And, to look at the matter from another point of view, it may be seriously maintained that we never really believe a thing until we are able to treat it sportively. The more profound our wisdom, the more lightly we shall wear it. It is a tradition of the Catholic Church, in her colleges and seminaries, that all ethical questions should be dealt with humourously. The Professor of Moral Philosophy, in those institutions is "der Lustige," as the Germans would say: the man who does the comic business. Carlyle, in one of his early Letters, speaks of a sense of the ridiculous as "brotherly sympathy with the downward side." It is a most pregnant saying. "Twenty-seven millions, mostly fools." Well, better to view them as fools than as knaves. For the emotion raised by folly is rather pity and ruth than anger. Then again, the Ludicrous, and especially the variety of it which we call satire, is an inestimable instrument of moral police. I do not say of moral reformation. What moral reformation really means is the conversion of the will from bad to good. And I do not think satire, as a rule, likely to effect that. But it is certainly a most effective deterrent. Goethe makes Werther, as the supposed author of the *Letters from Switzerland*, say, "One would always rather appear vicious than

ridiculous to any one else." And I suppose this is true of the vast majority of people. Hence it was that Pope was led to magnify his office :—

> "Yes, I am proud, I must be proud, to see
> Men not afraid of God, afraid of me ;
> Safe from the Bar, the Pulpit and the Throne,
> But touched and scared by ridicule alone."

But the clock, which beats out the little lives of men, has beaten out the brief hour of the lecturer. And so with these noble lines of our great ethical poet, I take my leave of my subject and of my audience.

NOTE TO P. 307.

To the Editor of the "Fortnightly Review."

"Cleveland, Ohio, July 10, 1896.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"The enclosed paragraph, which I clip from the *Leader* of this city, represents a writer in your periodical, as stating that the North American Indians were entirely destitute of the sense of the Ludicrous, an opinion which I think generally obtains among people who have not made a special study of the character of our aborigines. But I regard it as a slander upon the poor aborigines, and as I am almost one of them, my ancestors having come here from Holland in 1645, and helped to shoot a sense of the Ludicrous into them, and as they have no one to take their part, I feel like taking up cudgels in their defence.

"During the last year and a half I have been engaged in translating the *Jesuit Relations*, a work soon to be brought out by the publishing house of The Burrows Brothers Company

of this city, and in the course of my work I have found much information tending to contradict the opinion expressed by your contributor, against whom I feel no especial grudge, although he has basely slandered the people who discovered my country, and held it for my Dutch ancestors until they came over.

"It may not be out of place to state here that the Relations consist of the experience and observations of the French Jesuit missionaries in Canada and this country in the early part of the seventeenth century, and when published, the translation offset by the old French text, they will comprise about sixty volumes. The Jesuits spent all of their time among the Indians, their sole effort being to become acquainted with their character and language, in order that they might open a way for the introduction of their religion. They were very decided in their opinion that the North American Indian possesses quite a keen 'sense of the Ludicrous.' When the ship's crew, a few passengers, and the Jesuits all came on shore, the Indians stood off, and looked at them in the distance, making facetious remarks about them. The Father says that if one of the new-comers was corpulent, if he had a flat nose, was cross-eyed, or had any other characteristic distinguishing him from his companions, the Indians were quick to notice it and to laugh at it. 'They mock us behind our backs,' said one of the Fathers. 'They notice every little peculiarity in our dress, our manners and features, and make all the fun of it they please behind our backs,' says another.

"One of the Fathers mentions a village where the people did nothing at all, he thought, but amuse themselves by playing tricks upon him and upon each other. On one occasion a number of Indians combined to teach Father Paul le Jeune all of the vilest words in their language, and induced him to use them in a sermon in which he was trying to explain the mysteries of the Roman Catholic Church. His every sentence was greeted by loud roars of laughter from his congregation, but it was some time afterwards that the Father learned the full nature of the practical joke which had been perpetrated

upon him. You will laugh and think they have a keen 'sense of the Ludicrous' if you ever read the good Father's account of this incident.

"On another occasion one of the Fathers was spending a summer in a little Indian village, many of the inhabitants of which were extremely assiduous in their efforts to teach them their language. They were expecting a visit from a neighbouring tribe, and a part of the entertainment to the guests was to be a speech from the Jesuit priest in the Indian language. The Frenchman had his speech all ready to deliver, when one of the squaws informed him that the words taught him were very vulgar, and that the head-men of the village were attempting to use him for the amusement of their visitors. The Father refused to speak. He says that the Medicine-Men, who wield more influence than all of the others, threatened him, and that he, in turn, assumed a menacing tone to his oppressors. Finally, it was agreed that the Jesuit would speak to the company on condition that they would allow him to say what he pleased. His first words were greeted with loud guffaws, on account of his mistakes in their language. Nothing daunted by this, however, he continued his speech, pausing wherever the Indians laughed most vociferously, repeating his words several times, and finally inducing some children or women in the audience to tell him in what his mistake consisted, when he corrected it. At last he succeeded in quieting his unruly audience, and delivered to them quite an effective sermon.

"Many other instances are cited by the very observant Jesuits, showing a very fair sense of the Ludicrous among the aborigines of this continent. They probably had as good cause for laughter in the mistakes of the Jesuit missionaries, as audiences have every year in the Paris theatres at the manufactured mistakes made by personages purporting to be Englishmen, striving to speak the French tongue.

"Yours respectfully,

"JOHN CUTLER COVERT."

Index

A

Actors, their status in Shakespeare's time, 29
Agnosticism, value of the term, 45
the essence of, 46
Alphonsus Liguori, St., account of an ecstasy of, 275
Anglicanism, Cardinal Newman on, 255–257
Aquinas, St. Thomas, the basis of his philosophy, 27
on law, 42
Aristotle, on the truth of poetry, 34
on the Ludicrous, 300
Arnold, Dr. Thomas, greatness of his character, 247
Augustine, St., the thought dominating his mind, 27
Avenir, the, 169, 171

B

Bain, Dr., on the outburst of laughter, 305
Balzac, Honoré de, his place in French literature, 82–88
parallel between, and Shakespeare, 88
his object in the *Comédie Humaine*, 90–93, 140–142
divisions of that work, 94
his social portraiture, 96, 135, 140, 154
on artistic reality, 137–140
his political views, 142–146
his religious views, 146–149
his alleged immorality, 150
his philosophy, 152-153
Barrow, Isaac, on the Ludicrous, 287–288
Bible, the, Landor on, 78
Bishops, the Anglican, Cardinal Newman on, 240
real merits of, 240
Boccaccio, Landor on, 79
Bona, Cardinal, on the hour at which High Mass might be sung, 24
Bossuet, on the Church and the poor, 175
Bowden, Father Sebastian, his *Religion of Shakespeare* referred to, or quoted, 9, 10, 11, 18, 23, 24, 27, 28
Brenner, Friedrich, on evening Masses, 25
Browning, his merits and defects, 32
Bull, a, Sydney Smith's account of, 293
a proposed definition of, 293
Butler, Bishop, Cardinal Newman's obligations to, 225

C

Campion, on Cardinal Wolsey, 16
Carlyle, Thomas, on Shakespeare's ethos, 26
his judgment of Landor, 71
on a sense of the ridiculous, 310
Catena, his *Life of St. Pius V.*, referred to, 12
Catholics, English, in Cardinal Newman's youth, 191
work done for, by Tractarianism, 250
Catullus, Landor on, 80
Chasles on Balzac, 87
Christianity, Landor's view of, 73
Balzac's view of, 147–149
in England in the eighteenth century, 220–222
Church, the Anglican, its true character, 240, 256
Cardinal Newman's work for, 248–250
seen from without, 257–258
Church, the Catholic, Balzac's view of, 148
Lamennais' view of, 174
Cardinal Wiseman's view of, 205
Cardinal Newman's view of, 257, 259, 269

"Church Papist," 29
Church, Dean, on Calvinism in the Church of England, 4
Cicero, his definition of comedy, 140
on divination, 282
on inane laughter, 305
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, his influence on English thought, 229–231, 247
College, the English in Rome, life at, 183
Collins, Mr. Churton, his *Studies in Shakespeare*, 1, 2
Colvin, Mr. Sidney, on Landor, 54, 59, 60, 61
Comte, on Protestantism, 147
Concordat, the, of 1801, 162
Conscience, Tennyson's embodiment of, 49
Cardinal Newman on, 263
Courthope, Mr., on the authorship of *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, 13
on Falstaff, 20
on the Lollard "martyr" Oldcastle, 20
on Pope's religion, 26

D

Dante, Landor on, 79
the source of his power, 87
is an ethical judge, 140
Davies, the Rev. Richard, his statement as to Shakespeare's religion, 29
Döllinger, Dr., on the play of *Henry VIII.*, 19

E

Eflākī, instances of supernatural facts vouched for by, 276
Errington, Archbishop, the affair of, 208, 213
Evangelical party, the, rise of and work done by, 223
decadence of, 233

F

Fénelon, on Tacitus, 86
on the "Gallican Liberties," 166
Forster, Mr., his edition of Landor, 53, 64, 65, 70
on Southey, 75

G

Gabutio, his *Life of St. Pius V.*, quoted, 12
"Gallican Liberties," the, account of, 165
Cardinal Newman on, 166
Fénelon on, 166
Garibaldi and the Goddess of Reason, 211
Gautier, Théophile, on the use of a novel, 91
on Balzac, 140
Ghost stories, the, *a priori* argument against, 272
evidence for, in some cases, overwhelming, 274–275
Schopenhauer on, 277–278
the great majority of, either idle tales, or unworthy and misleading, 284
Gibson, Mr. W., his *The Abbé de Lamennais and the Liberal Catholic Movement in France*, quoted or referred to, 155, 156, 157, 172, 176, 177
Gillow, Mr., his *Bibliographical Dictionary of English Catholics*, referred to, 9, 28
Gladstone, Mr. W. E., whence the curious learning of his Vaticanism, 9
Gozlan, his *Balzac chez lui*, quoted, 138
Green, Professor, on Coleridge and Kant, 229
Gregory XVI., Pope, character of, 171
Lamennais' audience of, 173
publishes the Encyclical *Mirari Vos*, 173

H

Hare, Archdeacon, on Cardinal Manning, 217
Hawkins, Dr., Cardinal Newman's obligations to, 225
Hazlitt, on *Measure for Measure*, 22
Heine, on Shakespeare's alleged plagiarism, 6
on the opportuneness of Shakespeare's appearance, 26
on French sentimentality, 152
on modern French civilization, 154
Henry VIII., account of him in the Book of Homilies, 3
Shakespeare's account of, 18
Hergenröther, Cardinal, his *Catholic Church and Christian State*, quoted, 11
Homilies, the Anglican, on Henry VIII., 3
Hooker, his definition of law, 41
Humour, Dr. William Barry's definition of, 290
Walter Pater's account of, 290
what Sydney Smith meant by, 291
national varieties of, 296–299
Humourist, definition of, 285
Huxley, Professor, incompetent in purely philosophical questions, 41

I

Indians, North American, and the Ludicrous, 307, 311–313
Indulgences, Cardinal Beaufort's, 14

J

Johnson, Landor on, 78
Joubert, on the study of poetry, 34
Journalism, Parisian, Balzac's account of, 117–121
American, Charles Dickens on, 117

K

Kant, slow but sure influence of his philosophy, 224
on nature and the supernatural, 278
Keble, John, the influence of his *Christian Year*, 231–234
Knight, Mr., on Shakespeare's respect for "the ancient ecclesiastical character," 20–21

L

Lamartine, his judgment of Balzac, 84
Lamennais, Félicité de, his place among the great names of the nineteenth century, 155
his childhood and youth, 156–158, 176
his *Reflexions sur l'État de l'Église en France*, 161
is ordained priest, 162
his *Essay on Indifference*, 163
visits Rome, and is warmly received by Leo XII., 164
publishes his translation of the *Imitatio Christi*, 164
publishes his *La Religion considerée dans ses Rapports avec l'Ordre politique et social*, 164
his *Des progrès de la Revolution et de la guerre contre l'Eglise*, 167
and the Society of St. Peter, 168
at La Chênaie, 168
starts *l'Avenir*, 169
is censured by the French Bishops, 170
goes to Rome with Lacordaire and Montalembert, 171
his *Affaire de Rome*, 171
his interview with Pope Gregory, 173
and the Encyclical *Mirari Vos*, 173
goes out of the Catholic Church, 173
his death, 173
his prophetic vision, 174
the principle for which he fought, 175
the source of his mistakes, 175
his intellectual gifts, 177
Landor, Walter Savage, on Shakespeare's originality, 7
his personal history, 55–62
his work in pure literature, 63–71
his critical work, 71–81
his aloofness from Christianity, 71, 73
on the ways of our reviewers and magazine men, 72
his political opinions, 73
on philosophy, 74
on Shakespeare, 76
on Milton, 76
on Tennyson, 77
on Swift, 77
on Johnson, 78
on the Bible, 78
on the French language and literature, 78
on Boccaccio, 79
on Dante, 79
on Catullus, 80
Law, the true conception of, 40–42
definition of, by Hooker, 41
Aquinas's account of, 42
Tennyson's witness to the true conception of, 43–44
the primordial, of being, 46
the surest, of man's nature, 48
in politics, 50
Leo XIII., Pope, tone of his Encyclicals, 174
Lotze, on emotion and its expression, 301
Lowell, J. R., a great master of American humour, 297
Ludicrous, the, Isaac Barrow's account of, 287
varieties of, 289
national characteristics of, 296–299
philosophical accounts of, 299–305
sense of, a sign of intellectual opulence, 307
abuse of, 307
practical uses of, 308
ethical value of, 309

M

Macaulay, Lord, on the source of the power of the *Divine Comedy*, 87
Manning, Henry Edward, appointed Provost of Westminster, 206
greatly distrusted by hereditary Catholics, 207
his influence with Cardinal Wiseman, 207, 208
his ecclesiastical sympathies, 209
and the affair of Dr. Errington, 213
attainments and character of, 213–217

Martene, on the hour at which Mass might be said, 24
Mâya, the veil of, 309
Melanchthon, desires the assassination of Henry VIII., 11
Milman, Bishop, on Cardinal Manning, 213
Milton, Landor's judgment of, 76
Mirari Vos, the Encyclical, 173, 174

N

Napoleon, his ignorance of history, 144
and Pope Pius VII., 160
Newman, John Henry, on atheism and the phenomena of the physical world, 45
on the "Gallican Liberties," 166
his account of the condition of the Catholic Church in England in his youth, 191
on Pope Pius IX., 209
on the autonomy of the Pope, 210
the founder of the Tractarian Movement, 218, 234, 235
strong individuality of his writings, 219
surroundings of his early years, 220–224
attaches himself to the Evangelical school, 224
his spiritual horizon widens, 225
his obligations to Butler, 225
legend concerning his amendments to Report of Oxford Bible Society, 226
his ties with the Evangelical party severed, 226
his first friends at Oriel, 227
comes under new literary influences, 228–231
influence of *The Christian Year* upon, 233
begins the *Tracts for the Times*, 234
the fundamental principle of his religion, 236
his treatise on the *Via Media*, 238
on Anglican Bishops, 240
condemned by the Anglican episcopate, 241
preaches his last Anglican sermon, 242
accused of treachery, 244
his secession a proof of his good faith, 244–246
abiding influence of his *Oxford Sermons*, 249
no mere name of the past in the Church of England, 250
Newman—*continued.*
his influence in the Catholic Church, 250–253
his life as a Catholic, 253–254
significance of his later writings, 253–262
his controversial method, 255
his consistency from first to last, 256–257
on the Church of England seen from without, 257
on the Immaculate Conception and Papal Infallibility, 258–259
his trials as a Catholic, 259–262
his sympathy with Montalembert and Lacordaire, 260
his disapproval of the violence and cruelty of certain Catholic writers, 260
acknowledges only one Pope, 261
on the *Syllabus Errorum*, 261
his treatment of the great question of the day, 262–270
on the Invisible World, 273
on forbidden and unlawful knowledge, 281

P

Parody, what it is, 294–296
Patria Potestas, the base of national existence, 142
Peasantry, the French, Balzac on, 130
Petrarch, Landor on, 79
Phillipps, Mr. Halliwell, on Davies's statement regarding Shakespeare's religion, 30
Physicists, their dogmatism, 39
Pius V., St., meditates the removal of Queen Elizabeth, 12
discountenances evening Masses, 25
Pius IX., his wise and liberal measures at the beginning of his pontificate 199–200
his flight to Gaeta, 201
adulatory addresses to, 209
his *Syllabus Errorum*, 211, 261
his great favour to Dr. Manning, 214
Plato, on poetical inspiration, 5
on ordinary virtue, 36
on Τὸ Ἐρῶμενον, 47
on the first of certitudes, 48
on the Ludicrous, 299
Poetry, should be the great study of the philosopher, 34
Poets, are prophets in the proper sense, 36
Pollock, Lord Chief Baron, on the degree of certainty sufficient for a verdict of guilty in a murder case, 274

Pomponio Leto, on Cardinal Manning, 216
Pope, on the preservation of character in Shakespeare's plays, 17
his religion, 26
value of his *Essay on Criticism*, 33
infelicitous lines to Swift, 296
Pope, the, belief in, Cardinal Newman on, 269
Probability, Cardinal Newman on, 263
Protestantism, "Orthodox," 2–3
alleged, in Shakespeare's plays, 10–19
Puritanism, what it is, 4, 22

R

Realism, in art, 137–139
Reformation, the Anglican, phases of, 3–4
and Shakespeare, 4
Regalia, meaning of the term, 165
Reviewers and magazine men, Landor on, 72
Revolution, the French, Balzac on, 145
its influence on the movement of European thought, 227
Ritualists, Protestant, Cardinal Newman's opinion of, 245
Russell, the first Earl, on Newman's secession from the Church of England, 243

S

Sainte-Beuve, on Balzac, 83, 84, 87, 154
Sand, George, on the *Comédie Humaine*, 140
Schelling, on artistic inspiration, 36
Schiller, on complete man, 307
Schopenhauer, on ghost-seeing, 277–278
on the Ludicrous, 302–304
Science, true meaning of the term, 279
Sciences, the physical, their stupendous progress, 38
such progress not unmixed gain, 39
Scott, Sir Walter, influence of his poetry and prose fictions, 228
Sentimentality, Heine on, 152
Shakespeare, his knowledge of Greek and Roman classics, 1
orthodox Protestantism attributed to, 2
his occasional conformity to the Church of England, 4, 28–29
his plays his truest self, 5
his genius essentially dramatic, 6
Shakespeare—*continued*.
his plays composed to serve the purpose of the hour, 6, 7
charge of plagiarism against, 6, 7
his creative power, 7
did not employ the drama as a means of political instruction, 7
his mental attitude towards the problems of the day reflected in his dramas, 7
passages cited from his plays in support of his alleged Protestantism considered, 10–19
his treatment of the Protestant clergy, 19–20
his yearning fondness for the Old Faith, 20–23
his language about the Blessed Virgin, 21
his reverence for virginal chastity, 22
his Catholic imagery, 23
his mention of evening Mass, 23–26
"the noblest product of Middle-Age Catholicism," 26
his acquaintance with Catholic philosophy, 27
tradition that he was "reared up" by a Benedictine Monk, 28
Davies's statement, "He dyed a Papist," 29–30
Landor on, 76
paints the civilization of his age, 89
Simpson, Richard, his view of Shakespeare's teaching, 7
his Shakespearean studies, 7–9, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21, 23, 24, 29, 30
Smith, Sydney, his definitions of Wit, Humour, and Bull criticized, 290–293
Sophocles, his Polytheism, 2
Sorrow, the laugh of, 305
Southey, Landor on, 74
Cardinal Newman on, 75
Mr. Foster on, 75
Spedding, Mr., on the play of *Henry VIII.*, 18
Spencer, Father Ignatius, 187
Spencer, Herbert, his criterion of most highly evolved conduct, 22
on the Ludicrous, 301
Stanhope, Earl, his criticism of Mr. Simpson and M. Rio, 8, 17, 23–24
Stephen, Sir Leslie, on English religion in the eighteenth century, 221
Strabo, on the time for celebrating Mass, 24
Suarez, on tyrannicide, 11–12
Swedenborg, his influence on Balzac, 152
Swinburne, Mr., his tribute to Landor, 57
Syllabus Errorum, Pope Pius IX.'s, 211, 261

T

Taine, on Balzac, 85, 139, 141
Talbot, Mgr. George, a possible excuse for, 213
Tennyson, *the* English poet of the nineteenth century, 31
his poetry the result of prolonged meditation and prolonged labour, 33
his acute sensibility to the *Zeitgeist*, 37
his sympathy with the scientific movement, 38
his mission to witness to, and insist on, the true conception of law, 43, 51
his direct intuition into the constitution and needs of human nature, 44
his Theism, 44–47
his ethical creed, 48–49
his political principles, 49–51
his charm to quell the commonplace, 51
Landor on, 77
Thanatists, 273
Thornbury, Mr., on the Anglican clergy in the time of Shakespeare, 19–20
Tractarian Movement, the rise of, 234–235
line of thought upon which it proceeded, 236
collapse of, 239–243
goal of, 240
practical results of, 248–262
its bearing upon the great question of the day, 262–270
Tractarianism, the meaning of, 218–270
Trench, Archbishop, on Shakespeare and the Anglican Reformation, 4

V

Verona, evening Mass in, 25
Voltaire on apparitions, 272

W

Ward, Artemus, his humour, 298
Ward, Dr. A. W., on Shakespeare's religion, 28
Ward, Dr. W. G., his extravagances and absurdities, 209, 210
Ward, Mr. Wilfrid, his *Life and Times of Cardinal Wiseman*, 179–217
Wesley, Charles, his poetical merit, 233
Wesley, John, his character and work, 222
Whately, Archbishop, Cardinal Newman's obligations to, 225
White, Blanco, Cardinal Newman's obligations to, 225
Wiseman, Cardinal, character of, 180–181, 203, 204
his career, 182–212
his leading principles and definite aim, 185
his *Horæ Syriacæ*, 187
his *Lectures on the Connexion between Science and Revealed Religion*, 189
his sympathy with the movement of contemporary European thought, 190
success of his London Lectures, 193
founds the *Dublin Review*, 194
his influence on the Oxford Movement, 195–198
his influence on English Catholicism, 198
created Cardinal, and appointed Archbishop of Westminster, 202
cause of his influence, 205
Wit, its difference from humour, 290–293
Walter Pater's account of, 290
Sydney Smith's account of, 292
a proposed definition of, 293
Wordsworth, his merits and defects, 31
his special gift, 35
one of the highest of modern prophets, 37
his influence as a teacher, 231

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